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MEMOIRS

OF

DR. BLENKINSOP, *Adam, pseud.*

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

INCLUDING

HIS CAMPAIGNS, TRAVELS, AND ADVENTURES;

WITH

ANECDOTES OF GRAPHIOLOGY, AND SOME OF THE LETTERS  
OF HIS CORRESPONDENTS.

EDITED

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PADDIANA."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF THE

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CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
MY BURGLARY. . . . .	1

CHAPTER II.

A TRIAL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES . . . .	70
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT . . . . .	103
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IV.

TO IRELAND . . . . .	160
----------------------	-----

## CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
TO THE MEDITERRANEAN . . . .	188

## CHAPTER VI.

A WHOLE TURN OF THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE .	230
--	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

GRAPHIOLOGY AND LETTERS . . . .	301
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MEMOIRS  
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DR. BLENKINSOP.

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CHAPTER I.

MY BURGLARY.

3 PUNCTUALLY at the appointed time, I was set down from a coach in front of St. Paul's Church in the market, and as soon as the vehicle drove off Mr. Hussy presented himself; and, without a word spoken, took the trunk under his arms and proceeded into Henrietta Street, where I perceived a light cart with a

man in it, into which we mounted, and driving along Chandos Street, turned up St. Martin's Lane and so through St. Giles's to Oxford Street, travelling westward.

London at that time scarcely extended so far as Tyburn turnpike, which was at the bottom of the Edgeware Road. Not one of those palaces which now face the Park were then in existence, and the ground where now stand the princely squares of Paddingtonia was a space partly unused, partly occupied by brick-kilns and low cottages, and a shoot for anybody's rubbish. The Edgeware Road was just beginning to merge into a street, but the houses extended no further than where the canal now is.

Though the horse was a first-rate stepper, we proceeded at a very leisurely pace for about six miles on the Harrow Road, and then, suddenly turning to the left, entered upon a labyrinth of lanes and by-ways, scarcely ever passing a house; but frequently rousing the

dog of some gipsy encampment, and attracting a swarthy face to the opening of the small, low tent.

At least two hours were consumed in this kind of country. The night was dark, though clear; mild, and I thought rather too still for our purpose. Our driver, whose face I had no opportunity of seeing, as I sat on the second seat behind him, seemed perfectly acquainted with the country; and never for a moment hesitated at a cross-road, though frequently it appeared against the horse's will, by which I presumed that we chose the most unfrequented ways, those sagacious animals having, at night especially, an uncommon instinct for finding a house.

Towards midnight we decreased the pace, and got into a walk at last, as if we were a little too early; and about half-past twelve we stopped at a gate which shut up a road, leading to no house that I could see. It was here debated, in an undertone and mostly

in slang terms, whether it would be better to keep the horse and cart there, or to go a quarter of a mile down the road; but the last resolution was eventually adopted.

The horse was here led very quietly by my acquaintance, Mr. Hussey, and the wheels so guided clear of the ruts that as little noise as possible might be made. At length a large, solemn-looking house loomed in sight, having much the sombre appearance of a gaol—an effect which the more gained upon us as we approached near enough to see the massive iron bars with which the windows were crossed.

About two hundred yards from the house we got out of the cart, which was turned round, a sack thrown over the horse's loins, other sacks taken out of the cart, and from beneath them three pieces of an iron ladder, made to join together and fasten with a small catch on the outside opposite to each joining. Here Mr. Hussey asked me in a whisper if



I would remain with the cart, or come on with him. I, of course, decided for the latter, or rather, never had intended anything else; not that I had any particular fancy for breaking into the house, but I wanted to control any propensity which my friend might have to appropriate other articles besides my aunt; and, besides, it would have been wild work to send the two men to inquire for Miss Featherstone amongst the cells, with the chance of bringing off at last a wrong lady.

My resolution being expressed, Mr. Hussey handed me a couple of sacks, while he proceeded to fill the pockets of his shooting-jacket with various tools, and then taking the ladder on his shoulder, we approached the house.

"I made out," said Mr. Hussey, in a whisper, "as there ain't no dog, this saves a deal of trouble; but if so be as they've got one since, I've summit to quiet him. They had a dog three months ago, and he attacked one of the patients as was let out to walk in the garden.

Somebody set him on by giving a hiss from one of the windows ; and to be sure, the keeper said they had a great fight for he was a big mastiff, and tore the man shocking about the neck ; but at last the madman, he catches him by 'the throat with his teeth, and eat into him till he come to the bone, and so settled him. And all the while they was fighting and rolling about on the ground together, the devils up at the windows, or such of 'em as could get there, was clapping their hands and shouting, 'now man ! now dog !' according as they took sides between 'em."

While this whispered talk was going on we had reached the back of the premises, the whole of which were shut in by a wall about twelve feet high, running backwards from the wing to a depth of probably a hundreds yards in the rear. Against this we fixed our ladder, and Mr. Hussey mounting first, spread the two sacks upon the glass with which the top was fortified. He then motioned me to come up,

and having seated ourselves upon the sacks, we turned the ladder down into the garden, taking care to step clear of the soft mould on to the gravel walk. That no footsteps might be left behind.

The house was in the form of three sides of a square, or a front and two wings, the wings being scarcely so deep as the front; and it was at the centre window at the end of one of the wings, sagaciously conjectured to be at the end of a passage between two rows of cells, that my companion purposed to effect an entrance—his keen eye having discovered that it was without bars.

Upon the ladder being raised against the wall, it proved short for the purpose, not reaching the window by two feet at least; yet, notwithstanding Mr. Hussey commenced his operations vigorously, and in a few seconds had removed a pane of glass from the centre. The next operation was more difficult, for the sash was fastened with a padlock, which had to be picked from a very awkward position, and

certainly occupied a quarter of an hour, which seemed an age in that still garden, the silence only broken by the small noise made by Mr. Hussey, and an occasional dim rattle from within, as some unfortunate creature turned himself in his chains.

At last Mr. Hussey lifted the sash, and getting through the window, beckoned me to follow. Taking the dark lanthorn from his breast-pocket, he then turned its light along the passage. There were four doors on each side, and by extraordinary luck as it appeared to me, though giving rise to no expression of wonder on the part of my companion, the keys were all in the locks.

“Now, I wonder,” said he, in a very quiet whisper, “whether these be the delusions or no—we’ll soon see;” whereupon, taking a bludgeon from under his coat, where it hung by a loop, he gently opened the first door, and we went in. A sickly smell pervaded the apartment, which was wholly unfurnished, the walls white-washed, the floor stone, and the place comfort

less and repulsive in the extreme. On a heap of stuff which looked like chaff, or the ears of wheat broken off, lay a half naked man ; a few rags of flannel hanging about him, and a portion of the same enclosed within the chain with which his waist was encircled, and the end passed through a staple in the wall. The man fixed his eyes glaringly upon us as we entered, and gathered himself together into a sort of crouching sitting posture. His head was shaved, but his beard hung wild and tangled, and his person was filthy in the extreme.

Notwithstanding the disgust and horror which his appearance created, I felt an irresistible desire to stop and gaze at him—a thing in the semblance of a man, with more than the savageness of a wild beast. Perhaps it was from seeing the effect he had created in me that caused him to beckon me towards him ; but Mr. Hussey, catching me by the elbow, whispered : “Not an inch nearer—

he's a tearer!" The creature probably guessed the purport of his words, for he sprang at us like a tiger, and being checked suddenly by the chain, fell gnashing his teeth upon the floor.

"I'm much afraid," said Mr. Hussey, locking the door behind us when we left the cell, "that the Delusions are in the other wing: now whether to go and get up through that passage window, or go through the house is best, I hardly know."

We tried the next cell, and there a man lay on a truckle-bed, muttering words entirely incomprehensible to me, and addressed to some visionary object—certainly not to us. He was not chained, and his appearance neither so fierce nor repulsive as the last. The third seemed wholly insensible: he had a down, dogged look, an extremely dark complexion, and a most powerful frame. He had the air of a drunken Caliban.

Having looked into all the cells on that

floor of the wing without finding the object of our search, they being all occupied by men, and mostly bad or incurable cases, according to Mr. Hussey's experience—it was necessary to decide upon our further proceedings. The door at the end of the passage was locked, and as it opened into the first floor of the front building, where probably the proprietor and his keepers slept, it required great delicacy to conduct the operation, so as not to be heard by some one on that still night; particularly as Mr. Hussy remarked, that “them keepers as is always exposed to danger, sleeps with their one eye open: and if,” continued he, “they have left the key in the door, we’re done.”

The key, however, was not in the door, and my companion proceeded to try the lock with instruments of various shapes, which he produced from that inexhaustible magazine, his shooting-jacket pockets. After a few trials, he whispered that the door was

not locked at all—probably bolted, which was for us still worse. After trying the top and bottom of the door, which in some measure gave way to his push, he decided that the bolt was just under the lock. Probing the door with a brad-awl, he found the exact length of it, and bored a hole immediately behind the handle or knob. To enlarge this, so as to get a finger or two in, occupied nearly half-an-hour—so extremely cautious of noise was the operator—conscious of working within a few yards of those who, sleeping with one eye, had probably an ear open also.

At last the bolt was drawn back, and even that simple operation was a work of some time. Then Mr. Hussey took from his pocket two pairs of enormous slippers, made of sheep-skin, with the wool outside—and apparently more wool than nature had allotted to them—and these we each put on over our boots. He cautioned me in the use of these, to step



wide, lest one foot should tread upon the wool of the other; and to lift them well off the ground, so that no scraping or rustling noise should be heard in our way along the passage. He then turned the light on to reconnoitre the premises; and cautioned me that if any door suddenly opened, to stand entirely still, provided I was not in a line between that door and the end windows; if I was, either to sink down, or go to the opposite wall. Outside of one door was a chair with some clothes upon it, and a pair of dirty boots. Mr. Hussey touched me, and whispered, "the master."

Turning the light back again, we proceeded slowly and carefully along the passage, I following immediately in the steps of my more experienced companion, and keeping his figure directly between me and the end window, which revealed just sufficient light to mark its outline.

The night was so intensely still, that in addition to the steady prolonged snoring from

some of the rooms, we could plainly hear the deep breathing in others, with an occasional start or catch of the breath. In spite of our very precarious situation, Mr. Hussey could not refrain from turning to whisper his remarks as we went on.

“Two men’s noses in that room—keepers. Woman’s nose there—matron. Head-keeper as I see there, I think, by the sound on him.”

At length we reached the end of the passage, and found the door leading to the other wing, bolted like that we had entered by ; this was soon shot back, and we entered the wing, closing the door behind us. Here we turned on the light again, and found the keys in all the doors as before.

The first cell we entered contained a female, a comely woman of about thirty, who, as soon as she saw us, started up in bed, and holding out her arms towards Mr. Hussey, exclaimed in a wild hissing voice :

“Oh, Edward, Edward! are you come at last. My soul! come to me—the years that I have waited for you! come, come!”

“Hush! hush!” whispered the counterfeit Edward, quietly shutting the door behind us. “If you say a word you’ll spoil all—we’re going to lock in the keepers and matron, and the doctor, and all, and then I’ll come for you; but hush, for your life—not a word!”

She had a wild meaningless grey eye, and appeared to comprehend but little of this address; but the manner of it imposed silence, and she remained sitting up, with clenched hands, and a face as pale as marble, while we retired, holding up our fingers to warn her into silence.

“That’s a Delusion any how,” remarked Mr. Hussey, with a grim attempt at pleasantry, “to take me for her lovely Eddard! that ain’t so bad.”

In the next room we found a very curious object, she was an elderly person of most

minute size, fully dressed, and walking up and down the room. She was wasted and shrivelled to extreme thinness, and her cheeks were puckered up like a winter apple gathered unripe. After the first glance she took no notice whatever of us, but continued steadily and almost noiselessly her walk backwards and forwards with the precision of a pendulum. Her face indicated great mildness, and her cold blue eye was fixed on the wall towards which she was moving. The next was asleep—a woman also—the fourth started up in bed and exclaimed :

“What brings you here, you miscreants ! Can I have no rest even by night—am I to be made mad by breaking my rest ?”

It was my aunt, and I rushed forward and caught her in my arms.

The old lady struggled and held me at arm's length for a moment, till convinced of my identity. To make assurance doubly sure, she desired me to hand her her spectacles from the

dressing-table, and having satisfied herself, burst into a hearty natural flood of tears.

There was no time to spare, so I urged her to dress as quickly as possible, to bring with her only what was absolutely necessary; and we left her the lanthorn, and retired to the passage while she completed her toilet.

In a few minutes she came to the door, with a small bundle tied in a handkerchief, her spectacles in her hand, and an old white hat on her head, the same she used to wear while working in the garden at home—and in which it seems she was carried off, no doubt as an additional proof of an infirm mind. It even had some effect upon Mr. Hussey, who shook his head dubiously, as if he thought that her being shut up was not altogether without a cause.

To my question, whether she could get down a ladder and over a high wall, she answered that she would swim a river or throw herself from a precipice to escape from that horrible place.

Having no mufflers on her feet, it was thought advisable that Mr. Hussey should carry her along the passage of the front building, and in this order we quitted the female wing, the lady next the door emphatically whispering through the keyhole :

“Edward, Edward, come back to me, come back !”

Everything now seemed to favour us ; we had only to quit this passage without alarming the sleepers, and we should be comparatively safe. We had got about halfway along it, when my unlucky aunt dropped her spectacles, which falling on the bare boards, made an ominous clatter through the premises. Mr. Hussey was for pushing on and leaving them ; but this my aunt would by no means allow, and the whispering altercation which ensued between them, was still going on, when we distinctly heard some one jump out of bed in one of the rooms near us, move hurriedly about ; and then the click, click, of cocking a

a double-barrelled gun or pistol. Stepping nimbly against the opposite wall, we remained perfectly still and motionless ; the bed-room door opened, and apparently a head was thrust out to reconnoitre.

“ Was that you, Jem ? ”

No answer—all as still as death.

“ Cuss that cat ! it was her I suppose,” but still he left the door open, listening, till probably satisfied that no one was moving, he closed the door, eased the springs of his double gun and went to bed.

Still my aunt would not move without her spectacles, which fortunately I trod upon and recovered. Everything seemed now to go smoothly with us, when once within the wing with the door closed behind us. The mad persons on either side of us had been roused by our proceedings, and we could hear the rustling of straw or the clanking of chains in every room as we passed.

It was decided that I should first descend

the ladder, so that in the event of a slip of my aunt's foot, no very improbable contingency, I might be able in some way to break her fall. Hanging by the arms from the window, I groped for the ladder with my foot without at first finding it; and when I did, whether from awkwardness, too great haste to get away from the place, or its having been left somewhat out of the perpendicular, I pitched it on one side, and it fell to the ground. This, however, was speedily remedied: hanging by my arm as low as I could, I dropped easily and noiselessly on the soft earth below. The ladder was then raised for my aunt, who disdaining this pusilanimous mode of exit, insisted upon dropping too. Mr. Hussey then whispered emphatically: "Get her once over the wall, and I'll be with you directly." When this was effected, I waited on the wall for Hussey, who at last made his appearance, chuckling with some conceit wholly inexplicable to me.



Having taken the ladder to pieces and secured the sacks, we hastened towards the lane; to which we had scarcely arrived, when Mr. Hussey, putting his fingers in his mouth, gave a low but distinct whistle.

“Now then,” said he, “we have no time to lose,” and we ran forward to where we had left the cart. While stowing away the ladder under the sacks, a most unaccountable noise arose from the mad-house; at first a murmuring sound, then a slamming of doors, then a yell, a scream, a confused hubbub uniting all these noises, a wild hurrah and the crashing of panels, as if Bedlam had indeed broke loose.

What this could mean I had no conception; our horse was urged to his fastest trot; but still as we got away from the place the uproar increased; and to add to the din, a large bell begun to toll from the top of the house in a frantic irregular manner, as if the persons who pulled it, were employed in a matter of life and

death. We soon cleared the lane, and turned to the right towards London, by the way we had come, the bell tolling more furiously every moment, and sounds of demoniac laughter mingling with the horrid, unearthly screams from the place.

The more the noise increased, the more pronounced became Mr. Hussey's chuckling, and when a still louder explosion of infernal merriment was borne on the night air, he fairly roared with laughter. It was too good a joke, he thought, to be kept secret: he had unlocked the doors of all the cells in the wing we had last quitted, after communicating to such of the inmates as he considered sane enough or cunning enough to be entrusted with the secret—that he was escaped from his own cell, and they might all come out when he whistled, let loose as many as were not chained: “And then,” said he, “I told ’em in that front part through the door, there’s the keepers, and the doctor, and all—don’t you spare

'em on my account, I beg of you ; ' bust their doors,' says I, ' sarve 'em out,' says I ; ' they didn't spare you ; and then you chain 'em up ; and be sure you keep 'em safe,' says I, ' for them's the madmen, not we ;' and here he gave way to an obstreperous cackle of enjoyment at his practical joke, such as, till then, I had not supposed him capable of.

We hastened over the flat country, and ascended a narrow lane up a hill ; the bell still tolling in the distance.

" They can't bust that fellow's door, drat 'em," said the practical joker ; " and he'll have all the country raised with that cussed bell ; I didn't know as they had one ; but I hope they'll sarve out the rest."

I ventured to suggest that they might murder the proprietor, or a keeper or two, before any came to the summons of the bell.

" And serve them right, too," said my aunt, with much decision of manner, " and I've a great mind to go back and see the fun !"

This exhibition of spirit much pleased the gentlemen on the front seat, and I could see much raised my respected relative in their estimation.

Still there was one thing that wanted amendment. My aunt continued to wear her white hat in spite of all I could say to dissuade her from it. She had been guilty of nothing—not she. She had been forcibly taken away from her home, and she had a right to break away from her false imprisonment if she could—this was a free country, she hoped. She would wear neither fur cap nor velvet bonnet, but would return home as she left—that she would. In vain Mr. Hussey protested, urged thereto by nudges from the driver's elbow. Nothing but force, she was determined, should remove that white hat from her head.

This was a most unlooked-for difficulty. I suggested to her that although the concession might be unpleasant to her, yet as our liberties—nay, our lives were in danger, she might for

once give way. Not a bit of it. She bonnetted the hat down, and resolved to stand or fall by her resolution.

“If so be as you wish to see your nephew hanged, ma’am,” said Mr. Hussey, seriously, “why you wear that ’ere old gossamer and welcome; but if not, why give it to me, and I’ll take care as nobody shall see it no more.”

Finding his eloquence unavailing, he turned to me. “If so be as you goes into London with that ’ere hat on, fourteen pen’worth’s the least as you and I shall get, even if we be’ant lagged for life, or perhaps scragged out and out. I can hear the bell now. Lord what a shindy that must be!”

Not at all liking the contingencies pointed out by my experienced friend, I took an opportunity, while my aunt’s attention was drawn another way, to seize the hat and throw it over the hedge into the next field; but while the hat was yet whirling through the air, the owner had jumped upon the seat and vaulted over the

wheel to the road, and was making her way towards the hedge in pursuit.

“ I’ll tell you what it is Sir,” remarked Mr. Hussey, “ my opinion is as that’s a incurable delusion—she’s mad upon hats, and that’s all about it.”

Finding that nothing could be done with my impracticable relative, we proceeded in rather a downcast mood to London by precisely the same roads as we had traversed before, meeting only two or three men going out to some early work, and a head or two protruded from the gipsies’ tents, as before. We crossed the Edgware Road, and passed along the quiet streets leading to Portman Square, in one of which was a coach-stand ; and my singular companion and self were consigned to one of the great lumbering vehicles and driven to Berners Street, where I had taken lodgings. Mr. Hussey and his companion, as soon as they had deposited us on the pavement, and before the coach was called, had wisely driven away.

On the way to Berners Street, I exerted all my powers of persuasion to induce my aunt to adopt the bonnet and discard the abominable old hat, so likely to lead to our discovery ; but I soon found that she was one of those persons who, knowing their motives and their cause to be good, make it a point of conscience to spurn at any concession or concealment, and are determined to brave all difficulties or dangers to the last, entirely irrespective of their own or other persons' interests.

Independent of any considerations of danger to myself, I confess to having felt a little ashamed and mortified at appearing as the son of a lady who wore a white hat ; for I was then at the susceptible time of life when a young man is not only tenacious of his own outward pretensions, but alive to those of his friends.

The servant of the house was evidently startled when she let us in, for she took my aunt for a man, and rather a shabby one ; but

her wonder was considerably increased when the white hat was hung up, the cloak thrown off, and Miss Featherstone revealed herself in the short close petticoats, thick ankle boots, and no stays of her ordinary costume.

As my aunt's diet had been very sparing for an indefinite period, she began our house-keeping by a liberal order of beefsteaks for breakfast; and it was while in the act of a rather ungraceful consumption of these viands that the landlady entered, ostensibly to know if we wanted anything; but really, I suspect, to gratify a curiosity excited past all reasonable feminine endurance by the description of the servant maid. Nor was the personal appearance of the new lodger at all calculated to allay the feelings of curiosity previously raised by report. My aunt had come down to breakfast with her head decorously enough covered by a cap—one of the few things she had brought from the asylum—though sadly in want of some filling up at the sides, to



make up for the loss of hair. Being for so long a time unaccustomed to a fire, not to mention the influence of a good warm breakfast, she soon came to feel the room too sultry for her; and throwing off the cap, was seated at breakfast in her entirely bald shaved head, and, with spectacles on nose, was sharply examining each piece of meat she raised to her mouth.

“I hope, Ma’am,” began the landlady, “you find everything to your liking, and that the breakfast is such as you approve of?”

“Excellent!” said my aunt, with her mouth full; “and you’d say so too if you had been kept upon water-gruel, as I have, for this twelvemonth.”

“Dear me, Ma’am!” remarked the landlady, “how very singular! Recommended, of course, by the faculty? A regiment, of course, Ma’am, and certainly not a very pleasant one?”

“Not at all, I opine; and especially when I was worried to death by matrons, and doctors’

feeling my pulse, and my head shaved, and an open window all night, and not half bed-clothes enough."

I here broke in with some common-place remark, about not knowing what was best for us in illness, the necessity of submitting to the doctors, &c.

"Stuff and nonsense," said my aunt, "you know that I had no more the matter with me than you had; but they wanted to make me mad, so they treated me as a mad woman, but I got out of their hands, thank God, and they may catch me again if they can. To-morrow I'm going down to Gloucestershire," she continued, "please to find out when the coach goes, and take me an inside place to Gloucester: I could not breathe in this place."

The landlady courtied and promised to do so, rather glad it appeared to me to leave the room, and throwing a very significant glance at me for the trick she supposed I had played

her in bringing a mad woman into her lodgings. I saw that, of course any further attempt at concealment was hopeless, but I determined to keep my own counsel respecting my share in effecting the escape: it had not come out as yet, and I thought it best not to give any caution about it, but to leave things to take their course; decidedly glad, however, to get rid of my companion, and feeling a wonderful diminution of that respect and affection which had prompted me to incur such a risk in her behalf.

My aunt wrote herself to Dr. Mellish, to state her intention of arriving at home the next day, and her resolution of going direct to her own house, where she requested him to see that fires were lighted; and in the event of the doors being secured, to break them open by her authority. She so far yielded to my request as not to mention the circumstances attending her escape, meaning to relate all particulars on her arrival at home.

I was exceedingly glad to find that the Gloucester coach, in which the place had been taken, left town early in the morning, as I fully expected that the morning's newspaper would contain some account of the proceedings at the asylum; and doubtless the description afforded of the runaway patient would be immediately recognized by our curious landlady, who I suspected was not a little angry, though afraid to express it while so extraordinary and determined a character remained under her roof. I resolved to quit at the same time as my aunt, and having seen her to the coach, to go to some new hotel for a day or two, where my name would not be known, till I saw what turn matters were likely to take. I was cautious of writing to Dr. Mellish, since his covert caution respecting the post-master.

There were three other passengers in the Gloucester coach, and not a little they stared when the lady in the white hat was handed in to them. I knew it was of no use to say any-

thing by way of creating a diversion, for that the truth would certainly come out during the journey ; so hastily shaking hands, I was going back to the hackney-coach, when my aunt thrust her head out of the window and insisted upon giving me a kiss, which, appearing to the bystanders to come from a man, created some little wonder and a few jokes amongst them.

Not caring to be traced, I desired the man to put me down in Sackville Street, at the corner of Piccadilly, that I might be ready for one of the country coaches soon to pass that way ; and having taken a ride as far as Hammersmith, returned in another coach, and settled myself at the Salopian Coffee-house, at Charing Cross, taking care to have no direction on my portmanteau, and paying for every meal as I had it.

As I expected, the "Times" contained a paragraph, headed, "Daring and mysterious burglary, and abduction of a female patient

from a lunatic asylum," going on to describe the breaking out of the patients, their forcing the keepers' doors open, and after subjecting them to many indignities and considerable punishment, placed them and the proprietor of the establishment in irons, covered with filth, and crowned with ignoble utensils, while they executed a demon dance round them, accompanied by yells and screams, and clanking of chains. That one of the under-keepers fortunately succeeded in reaching the bell-room, which was entered by a trap-door and ladder, and by ringing the alarm bell, at length procured assistance, by which the wretched maniacs were overcome, and the proprietor and his keepers released from their perilous position. The editor went on to express his earnest hope that the heartless miscreants who committed the outrage would soon be in the hands of justice, and receive the punishment they so justly deserved. No names were given, but an evening paper stated with reference to a

paragraph which appeared in a morning contemporary relating to the outrage perpetrated at the lunatic asylum, in the neighbourhood of Harrow, that circumstances had transpired relative to the missing lady, and a person supposed to be connected with the gang concerned in this daring transaction, which left little doubt that at least one person implicated would speedily be in custody.

I now for the first time fully comprehended the very unpleasant and dangerous predicament in which I stood. I was one of a "gang" connected with miscreants in a daring outrage, consequently a miscreant myself: the terror of timid householders, a bugbear for children, and hated of all good men; that a full description of my person and clothes was probably by this time at every police-office in London, and being carried all over the country by the night mails; that in all probability at that very moment the surplus Bow Street runners were running breast-high upon my trail, and that

the news of my capture would be received with one universal shout of rejoicing, taking its time from the able editors who first gave it out to the world ; that men of fashion would soon begin to think of taking places from whence to see my execution, and that my last dying speech and confession would be a remunerative literary speculation in every town and village in the kingdom. I felt myself another being, London another place ; even the coffee-room and its inmates wholly changed with reference to me. I imagined the indignant surprise of the respectable landlord, on discovering that the now notorious individual who was concerned in the atrocious outrage at the madhouse, was one of his guests, and ordering about his waiters ; sleeping in his bed, and confidently waited on by his unsuspecting chambermaids ; nay, I could enter into the feelings of the boots, when he should come to know that he had brushed a burglar's coat, and cleaned a housebreaker's high-lows. If



the name once transpired in print, it was all over with me, so I booked myself as "Cash" in the Dover mail, and left London that night.

Of course, the daring outrage was the subject of conversation with the inside passengers. They were a little astray in the facts.

"I understand," said one, "that the girl (I imagine my poor aunt being ever called a girl!) they ran off with, had formerly been engaged to one of them, and had gone mad on his deserting her; that this had caused a return of his old affection, and he had determined to take her out of the asylum."

"But why did he let loose the madmen?" asked an elderly gentleman, "surely that had nothing to do with the love affair, and might have caused the most fatal consequences."

"What capital fun!" said the third, "that was by far the best of it. I'd have gone a hundred miles with pleasure to see those

fellows in irons, and the madmen dancing round them. We ought to have that in the next Christmas pantomime."

"I only know one man," said the first, "who is likely to have done such a thing as that—Jones of the 150th—exactly the thing Jones would have done."

In my desolate state I felt it a comfort to know that there was one man in the world who would be likely to sympathise with me, and determined to get introduced to Jones of the 150th, the very first opportunity that offered.

"I wonder what became of the mad girl and her lover," said the old gentleman.

"Oh! that was capital. They were discovered going down to Gloucester in the coach, the man disguised as a Quaker. They were found out by the lady wearing a white hat, which she took by mistake in the dark, when they got her out of the mad-house, and which she wore in the coach, and they discovered the man by his being so attentive to her. Well,

at Gloucester they gave them into custody, but the Quaker showed such desperate fight, that nobody could lay hold of him; he knocked one police officer down and broke his jaw, and pitched the other down stairs upon the landlord and waiter, who were carrying up a tureen of soup and a heap of plates; threw the hot soup all over the landlord's face, and scalded one eye out, cut the waiter cruelly with the plates, sprained his ankle, and threw the landlady into fits. In the confusion the girl escaped down the back stairs, and has not since been heard of; but they took the pretended Quaker after great trouble, and lodged him in Gloucester jail.

“What a capital thought to dress up as a Quaker! Just the very thing Jones would have done!”

“Now, what can they do with this fellow? Is he a gentleman?”

“Oh! a man of large property; drove down to the mad-house in his curricule with two servants, and they say took down Bill Davis

with him, the famous fellow supposed to have committed the great city robberies, and broke open the house in Grosvenor Square the other night. The police have found out that Davis was out of his lodging all night, but they have not been able to bring it home to him. They are sure to catch the principal, who is a well-known man. I did hear at Arthur's he was a colonel in the army, and lived in St. James's Street, a great friend of Brummel's; safe to have him, unless he's out of England."

"You are sure he's a colonel? Really should not wonder if it's Jones after all. I don't know what they can do with such a case as this."

"Do! Why hang him most certainly, unless he has any great interest indeed. It is not a common housebreaking, you see; they not only broke into the man's house and stole his patient, but went into every cell he had, and one woman actually fell in love with him, and has raved of nothing else since."

“What, did he go into the women’s cells?”

“Of course he did; and saw them all in bed, or in straw, or whatever it was.”

“Jones all over, upon my soul! And one of the mad women fell in love with him?”

“Fell furiously in love with him, I was told down at Uxbridge; and has expected him back every moment since, and is got so dangerous nobody can go near her. I suppose such a thing never happened before in all the world. They had a narrow escape though, in going from one wing to the other; for in passing the keeper’s door, he heard a noise and got out his gun, and would have certainly shot a couple of them; but whether they had got safe out of the passage, or how it was, nobody can tell; but he heard nothing more till the madmen began to make a row, and he ran into the passage with his whip in his hand, not knowing of course that they were loose; and then six or seven of them surrounded him, and beat

him with the end of a chain, and then threw him into a raving fellow, that was howling like a wild beast, chained to the wall, and if the keeper hadn't been an uncommon strong fellow, he'd have been killed ; as it was, the madman bit off his nose. The next they got was the Doctor, and then the under-keeper, and put them all three in straight waistcoats, and chained them all together and danced round them."

"If that wasn't Jones, I'm not travelling to Dover! Nobody in the world would have thought of letting loose the madmen, but him!"

In such talk as this passed the early part of the journey, till my companions dropped off one by one to sleep. The reference to my uncle gave rise to very serious, yet ludicrous reflections in my mind ; for if he were to be arrested or troubled at all, even suspected of being concerned in such an affair, and through me, I much doubted if even a

change in my profession, involving a complete new outfit, would have interested him sufficiently to ensure his forgiveness. The very rumour of his having associated with Bill Davis, the burglar, even for a moment, not to mention the carrying out a contrived scheme of robbing a mad-house; subsequently escaping in the disguise of a quaker—a people of all others he most detested—showing fight in a public-house in Gloucester, and being lodged in gaol among the common robbers of that place—would, I felt, have been an offence wholly unpardonable in his eyes.

We were set down at Wright's Hotel, at Dover, about seven in the morning, and the packet not sailing for Calais till ten, had ample time to dress and breakfast. Waiting the arrival of this meal, an evening paper, fresh from the post office, was handed to me by the waiter, and one of the first things my eyes rested upon was the following:

“THE MADHOUSE AFFAIR.—From certain

circumstances which transpired this morning, relative to this extraordinary case, suspicion attaches to a gentleman of high standing in the fashionable world, formerly holding a commission in the Guards, who is understood to be a near relative of the lady forcibly removed from the asylum, and it is reported much interested in her release. The gallant Colonel is at present on a visit to the Duke of ——, not a hundred miles from the scene of action; and the information conveyed to Bow Street was deemed so important that Townsend was at once dispatched to the Duke's residence, with a warrant for the apprehension of the gentleman in question. We give the report as we heard it, without in any way vouching for its accuracy. The result of Townsend's visit has not yet transpired. There are other rumours of the gallant officer having escaped to Gloucester in the garb of a Quaker, and violently resisting the officers who attempted to take him into custody; but we refrain from further notice



of such reports, as they want confirmation. This most daring outrage, distinguished as it is by so many novel and exciting features, will no doubt stimulate the officers of police all over the country, to exert every effort in effecting the capture of all concerned."

Here was sufficient food for reflection : almost the worst that I could anticipate had befallen ; but still I knew that my uncle could at once clear himself, and might possibly, after a time, get over being made the talk of the town. I was much pleased to think that nothing leading to me had appeared in print, either by name, description, or suspicion ; so having despatched my breakfast, I walked to the pier in company with the three passengers who had come with me from town. The packet was very full, for people were flocking over to France, now that the Government seemed established. There was the usual bustle of porters, and stowing of

luggage, and parting of friends and acquaintances, but amongst it all I felt truly desolate and alone. I almost wished I had given myself up at once in London; for that the offence would eventually be traced to me, either by my aunt's wilful carelessness, or by the people of the house where we had lodged, I thought there could be no reasonable doubt.

"Going across, Sir?" said a stranger to me, rather abruptly.

"Yes."

"Came from London, I think, by the mail?"

"Yes! Have you any business with me?"

"A little. May I ask you to step this way a moment? Your place, I think, was booked for Cash. May I take the liberty of asking your name?"

"Show me some authority for the inquiry, and you shall have it."

“I am a Bow Street officer; and you are suspected of being concerned in breaking open the mad-house out beyond Harrow. You are, I think, ——?”

“——.”

“Exactly so. Very sorry, Sir, but you must please to come along with me.”

In half a minute the rumour spread. There was a rush towards the ladder I was about to ascend, and fifty voices exclaiming, “That’s the man that broke open the mad-house!” “Which? who? where? Shew me him! That the fellow in the brown coat and tops?” “No, that’s the officer who has taken him.” “What! that gentleman?” “There he is! That’s the man that carried off the mad girl!” “Is it possible?” “Dear! dear! what a pity!” “He’ll be hanged, as sure as he lives!” “Not he!” “Won’t he though? you’ll see!” “To think that we should have come down in the mail with him!” “Well, upon my life! he’s as like Jones as two peas!”

“ I shall not lay a hand upon you, Sir,” said the officer, “ if you promise not to attempt an escape.”

“ You may rely upon it, I shall make no attempt of the kind.” So we walked along side by side to the magistrate’s house. The news spread like wildfire through the town, but as the officer and I walked so amicably together, and he being a stranger, we were not suspected ; and we could not help laughing at the crowd rushing against and throwing each other down, in their eagerness to get sight of the man who had committed so singular a crime. If they had had any observation about them, they must have seen, by our very tranquillity, that we were the persons they were in search of. They got before us, however, to the Mayor’s, and finding that nothing was known there of the capture, began to think it a hoax, and were just beginning to come away disappointed. We pursued our way unopposed through the throng, and my companion requested a private interview

with his worship. We were accordingly introduced into a dining-room, where the great borough functionary sat reading an evening paper over the remains of his breakfast.

The officer informed him in a few words, that he had effected the capture of a person supposed to be concerned in the breaking open the lunatic asylum, and carrying off the lady who was confined therein.

“Where on earth have you lodged him?” cried his worship; “safe, I hope?”

“This is he,” said the officer, very quietly.

His worship gave such a start, that he nearly upset the breakfast table, and well-nigh tilted himself over on the floor; and, in saving himself from that fate, clutched at the table-cloth, and pulled over a plate and tea-cup into his lap. Never having supposed myself capable of creating such a sensation, I fairly burst out into a hearty laugh.

“Perhaps, Sir,” said the officer, who was a bit of a wag, “you’d allow him to stay here

with you for a minute, and I'll go and get the papers you want?"

"God forbid!" said the mayor, hastily, "on no account whatever — by no means. I'd rather not be left for a moment with Bill Davis alone. No, I thank you; I'll just ring for a pair of handcuffs, if you haven't any in your pocket."

"No occasion, your worship, I think," said the officer. "I don't think he's a desperate character. This is not Bill Davis, you understand. This ain't a regular cracksman, I'll answer for him. He promises not to try to escape; and I'll answer for it he keeps his word."

"Well, well," said the Mayor, "perhaps he may—I dare say he will, that's your look out. You stay here with him, and I'll be back immediately. Dear me! what a surprising event!"

The officer and I sat down by the fire, making merry with his worship's fears. Presently we heard the voice of the crowd outside

the house, and then a head was thrust furtively in at the door and as quickly withdrawn, then another, then two not withdrawn, then two more added to them, females, behind a man's head, and another. [The cook and housemaid were the forlorn hope, and pushed forward at first, unwillingly by those behind. As they saw us so amicable, they became the more assured. Soon after, a young lady was made way for, then her elder sister, subsequently the Mayoress herself displaced these with her ample person.

"That's Bill Davis in the brown coat and top-boots," whispered the cook, "and the young gentleman him as was in love with the mad woman, and carried her off. Well, if they hang him for that, it will be a pity, won't it?"

"I quite shudder," said the Mayoress, "when I look on those dreadful men."

"Law, ma!" said one of her daughters, "they don't seem so very dreadful."

"My dear, don't you call it dreadful, to

break in upon respectable deranged females in the dead of night, with a rabble of maniacs at their heels, yelling, and screeching, and committing all sorts of rudeness, and beating the keepers, and putting the doctor in irons under disgusting circumstances, and then dancing round him. I declare hope they may both be hanged, for my part ; nobody's safe while such desperate characters are at large."

His worship here returned, in a state of some trepidation, for the crowd had increased, and he was either afraid of their breaking in, or rescuing the prisoner, or maltreating him, as the humour happened to take them.

"No danger of the last," said the officer, this ain't one of the things that they tear people to pieces for. A rescue's more in their way. But I think I understand you, Sir, as you'll do nothing to bring that about ; I've your promise I believe, till we get to town?"

I assured my civil friend that he had nothing to apprehend on my part, and he implicitly



believed me. Even his worship relaxed in his fears, and invited me to take some refreshment and remain till the coach started at eleven o'clock. He had also interest enough to get us taken up at his own door at that time, instead of returning again through the streets to the hotel. The other passengers were ignorant of the notorious character they happened to be associated with, so our journey to town passed without anything remarkable.

We arrived in London soon after nine at night, and it was necessary that I should remain till morning at the police-office. Upon the good report of my captor, I was allowed to sit up by the fire with the officers, instead of being locked up in the cells; an indulgence, partly perhaps owing to the great interest exerted in my novel case, and partly that the thing partook of the nature of an aristocratic "spree," or "lark," as it would now be called; for which order of delinquencies much allowance was made till of late years.

The next morning I was brought before the magistrate. As the news of the capture had not reached the morning papers in time, but little interest was manifested in the neighbourhood of the office. Alongside of me was placed a determined-looking fellow, coarsely dressed, whom I had never seen before, and who looked, I observed, from time to time, very curiously at me. After being cautioned that my answers would be taken down, I was asked my name, address, profession, &c. all of which I gave frankly, where I was on the night of the outrage, but that I declined to mention. My going to Dover was fully accounted for by the near expiration of my leave of absence, the letter relating to which I handed to the magistrate. My neighbour was then addressed as William Davis, had been a carpenter, a horse dealer, a prize fighter, nothing particular now, but did odd jobs. Would not say where he was on the night in question. Would not compromise no one. Denied the right of being questioned in a free country.

The two first witnesses called were the landlady of the lodgings and her servant-maid, who deposed to my taking the lodgings, and bringing about the time specified the next morning, an elderly lady, wearing a white hat. My aunt's appearance and manner at the breakfast table were minutely described, and the landlady's conviction of her insanity; how we subsequently went away the second day in a coach, and giving up the lodgings before the expiration of the term. Then came the hackney-coachman who had driven the two gentlemen from near Portman Square to Berners Street. Could not justly say, whether I was one of them, but thought I was; was pretty sure the man at my elbow was not the other, wouldn't swear he was or was not; was quite sure they were two men we took to Berners Street, as far as all appearance went. The other wore a white hat, man's cloak, strong shoes, and he saw no petticoats between the cloak and the feet.

Then came another man who was going from Duke Street, Manchester Square, to Paddington; saw two men get out of a cart, leaving two others in the cart; they had a box between them. One wore a white hat. Felt quite sure that the one who wore the white hat was not a female. Could not see the faces of any. Could not say the accused was one, nor whether the other man was one. Never saw either before to the best of his judgment.

Both Bill Davis and myself, protested that we had never seen each other before, and this I saw the magistrate believed. As there was no evidence whatever against Davis, he was discharged. Before leaving the Court, he relieved his mind by paying me an unexpected compliment. "If this here gentleman was the man as planned and did that 'ere business, I can only say as he's the promisingest chap as I've seen for a long time."

And with this flattering opinion, he gave me an encouraging nod, as much as to say : “ Go on—you’ll do !”

I had no solicitor or other person to advise with during this examination, and whether the offence was a bailable one I have never inquired to this day. Nobody said a word about bail, and if it had been mentioned, I should have known nobody to apply to in London. My uncle I certainly should not have ventured to ask. The evidence was against me as far as it went, but to give time for other witnesses to come forward, the case was remanded for a week, and I was committed to the Compter. From thence I wrote a short letter to my uncle, stating briefly that I had come across suddenly to assist at a friend’s wedding, and had been much disappointed at not finding him in town. I then told him how I had been taken into custody on suspicion of releasing my aunt from the asylum, and that I should be happy to tell him personally all I knew about it. Hoped that he

had suffered no trouble or inconvenience from what had occurred, and remained his affectionate nephew.

The week passed without any answer to this so I concluded that my uncle had not yet had time to recover his equanimity, after the suspicion of being a housebreaker and an associate of Bill Davis. I can't say that I was oppressed or cast down, neither had I any great apprehension of the consequences. The gaoler treated the matter lightly, and gave me as much indulgence as was consistent with my safe keeping.

At my second examination, I was extremely pleased to find that no one was brought up but myself. Mr. Hussey, thanks to his disguise and his friend of the cart, had, I supposed, escaped suspicion. In addition to the other witnesses, there came this time the superintendent of the Asylum, and his head-keeper with his nose bound up. They of course had never seen me before: all they could depose to was that Miss Featherstone had been duly

delivered into the proprietor's hands by her eldest brother, with a certificate of her unsound state of mind from a medical gentleman of great authority in such cases, and that her conduct altogether, though harmless, was such as to convince all in the establishment of the propriety of her confinement. That she came to the house dressed in a white hat, which, apparently she had taken away with her. I declined to give any further account of myself, or to call any one to speak about me, so after a short consultation between the functionaries of the Court, was duly committed to Newgate to take my trial.

I can't say that I was wholly unmoved on entering that gloomy structure; whose enormous walls, and cold stern architecture cannot fail to strike a chill into the most resolute mind; but perhaps the rough life I had led for some years, rendered me to a certain extent unmindful of the absence of those conventional comforts which persons of

my station are usually accustomed to. It is a brave old verse of Richard Lovelace :

“ Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage ;  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
That for an hermitage,”

but I never could quite raise my imagination to that exalted point.

The third evening had arrived, and no news of my uncle, either by presence, letter, or message. I thought the least he could have done would be to send his solicitor to me, but having happily — perhaps in a worldly sense I should say, unhappily — a disinclination to ask favours, so have I sufficient pride to bear me up where they are withheld — not unaccompanied by a secret satisfaction at being relieved from the burden of gratitude.

On the fourth morning, a visitor is announced — it couldn't possibly be my uncle, I thought, for to visit a prison I justly con-



sided wholly beyond the reach of his philanthropy. It was my excellent friend, Roger Strong, who, seeing an account of my capture in the county paper, had broke through the strong fetters of the honeymoon to offer his services in any way I might require.

He was entirely cast down at my situation. He knew that housebreakers, if the crime were brought reasonably home to them, were punctually and rigorously hanged; and as the evidence in his mind was of too convincing a character, coupled with my expressed indignation—long since communicated to him—at my aunt's false imprisonment, and my determination to use every means of setting her free, he was thoroughly convinced that my days were numbered.

Although I am not quite without the power of extracting a certain amusement from the contemplation of my own follies, yet it requires more elasticity of spirit than I then possessed, immured within those grim walls, to keep my

heart up under the influence of such a Job's comforter as this. A man may cheerfully bear being hanged, when he could not bear cheerfully to be told of that sure event every day for a month before it was to come to pass. I was therefore by no means sorry when a visitor of another kind came, just as my downcast Benedict was about to take his leave. This was Captain Hall, whom the reader may remember as taking an active part in my favour on occasion of my meeting with Major Briggs.

There could not be a fitter man than this to encounter my lugubrious and literal friend Strong, so I invited them both to dine with me next day, the Governor's permission being previously obtained for such an indulgence. The turnkey was then instructed to order a sufficient dinner from an hotel on Ludgate Hill, the only stipulation on the Governor's part being that we were to be waited on by the turnkey only, who was on no consideration to leave the cell.

Punctually at five my friends arrived. Strong decorously dressed in black, as if he were to assist at the funeral. I could observe that he approached me with a kind of restrained awe, as one about to take flight from this wicked world, and therefore not to be intruded on by its frivolous cares. He doubted the propriety of importuning a man just on the point of mounting to a world of spirits with the trivial offer of a potato, and whether it would savour too much of mockery to ask him for gravy, who was standing on the edge of the grave. Hall made the most of this.

“Strong, my good fellow, let us eat and drink—you know the rest; but while thinking of ourselves, don’t let us forget the worthy burglar on your left: you can see what he’s doing better than I. Perhaps we may never have another opportunity of drinking a glass of brown sherry with a respectable housebreaker, so help our friend the felon, and pass the wine. But you see he does not eat; now there can be

no harm in pressing him to turkey, on the contrary; though perhaps it might be personal to offer him this loop or noose of sausage, therefore put that aside: and whatever you do, say nothing about the artichoke. It showed, indeed, great strength of mind in our poor friend to order that vegetable; but I'll answer for it, there is not a more thoughtful jail-bird in London, no nor any county prison either. In fact, I'm entirely of opinion—and I'm sure you'll say so too—that a more friendly, honourable, hospitable, warm-hearted miscreant does not exist. I know you too well to doubt this. This is a gallows hard crust—I beg pardon, no offence, I hope—I meant a rather over-baked piece of outside. I'll take another chop, Strong, if you are quite sure it is not off the scragg—ahem!—small end of the neck, I mean. I suppose, Mr. Ketch," he said, "addressing the turnkey, whom he persisted in calling by that time-honoured name: "I suppose, Mr. Ketch, you have seen many a fine fellow mount up

aloft to take a last view from the top of this place before he leaves it: not a lively prospect, I imagine?"

To this the turnkey responded by a dry wink, modified, after a pause, by a nod, as much as to say, "I believe you, my boy!"

"Now in the case of this gentleman, if proved, which it can't be, it was a mere lark to release an old lady, and give the madmen a holiday—don't you think so? Things are come to a pretty pass when a man can't call upon his aunt to take a dish of tea at rather a late hour in the evening, whether by invitation or otherwise. Why people don't go to a party till eleven, and I've known a royal Duke drop in at two in the morning. The madmen let him in of course, whoever it was."

The answer to which was a puckering up of the lips into a noiseless whistle, equivalent to the word "Walker!"

He was a rough uncouth fellow that turnkey, but not wholly insensible to the professional wit

of my friend. He seemed to have two left hands, but both very strong ones. He never used the hand first that happened to be next to what he wanted to take hold of, but brought the other across his body, and made the near hand an auxiliary. Every plate he handed seemed to be taken into strong custody, and when he screwed the stopper into the decanter, it was like turning the key upon the wine, and no one could unlock it but himself.

Before the end of dinner, we made a notable discovery in his character—we caught him taking a pinch of snuff. It was agreeable to find that there was a link which tied him to common humanity. Though a predatory snuff-taker may be a hard, selfish, morose fellow, yet no man who carries a box is wholly so. The very fact of his possessing a medium for the interchange of courtesies, proves the existence of some courteous feelings in himself; for even if he fail to offer his box, he renders himself liable to be asked for it, and the compli-

ment alone induces some benignity, to say nothing of that great principle in human nature, that we think kindly of those on whom we have conferred favours.

Hall took instant advantage of this discovery, falling at once into the familiarity of "Ketch, allow me to try your snuff. Ah! this is something like real high toast, and no manner of mistake; this is properly done brown—no personal allusion, my dear friend. When I take a pinch of snuff, I like to feel that I've taken one. Now, if you take a good pull at this it half chokes—ahem!—produces a spasm in the what's-his name, that almost takes away your breath. Who's your tobacconist, Ketch?"

"Why," said the turnkey, partially thawing, "that's real Welsh, I gets that sent up now and then, when a opportunity offers of a officer going down, or such like. I wish I knowed of a witness as was coming up, I'd get some more."

"My dear fellow," said Hall, "I know the very man, a fellow that stole a horse from a

Bermondsey tanner, and rode him down to Aberga'ny, and there they knew him from the description, and had him in gaol in no time. Sharp fellows these Welshmen.

The turnkey indicated, by a slow diagonal nod, that they did know a thing or two.

“So I'll write to a second uncle I have down there, and tell him to send up a canister, and leave it for you here.

This was not without effect upon my hard-handed friend ; and I believe that I may attribute some relaxation in my case of the strict rules of the prison, to the pinch of snuff.

By the assistance of my friends, I was provided with sufficient legal assistance, and to those gentlemen I disclosed the full and particular description of the whole affair, suppressing only the names of my coadjutors in the transaction. Dr. Mellish wrote kindly more than once, offering me what funds I might stand in need of ; but thanks to my uncle's very liberal allowance, I did not want them. Miss Fea-



therstone, after taking possession of her house, he told me, and braving the world's opinion in a white hat, had suddenly disappeared — no doubt to occupy her former apartments in the asylum ; at which, I confess, I felt no very poignant regret.

## CHAPTER II.

## A TRIAL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

AT length the great day of trial came. I was attended into Court by my trusty friends Hall and Strong. The Court was crammed, and even the avenues and approaches blocked up with hundreds of persons unable to procure admission to the interior. Casting a glance round the Court, among the spectators, I was pleased to see Mr. Hussey comfortably seated. It was a sincere pleasure to me that I had not to reproach myself with having got him into a scrape. Before me on the bench sat the learned judge, the very impersonation of unimpassioned justice. In the

gulf between me and him there floated a waving surface of wigs, nodding at each other, or juxta-posed in conversation. There was a sprightly relish of anticipation amongst them: jokes were inscribed on slips of paper and passed about; the perpetrators lying back in chuckling expectation of the smiles that would be raised by these little baits so cast upon the waters. This principally took place amongst that large class of expectants irreverently called "briefless," who made up four fifths of the mountain of horsehair before me.

Silence having been proclaimed, and the jury called over and sworn, the charge, magnified into four or five counts, in which forcibly entering the dwelling house, carrying away a female patient, letting loose the madmen, and in conjunction with them perpetrating various atrocious outrages on the proprietor and his assistants, were duly set forth in lengthy legal jargon. Then I was asked in an off-hand

way if I pleaded guilty or not guilty, to which I answered in a firm voice, as the reporters duly chronicled: "Not guilty." Then rose the learned counsel, and you might have heard a pin drop in the Court, if it had fallen upon any hard substance.

The learned gentleman, though on his legs, seemed to hesitate to begin. He looked down at his brief, cleared his throat, and toning his voice down to the prevailing sentiment of the place, proceeded to open the case to the jury. In the long course of an arduous, and in some respects he might say, a thankless profession, he had been called upon to enter into details, and drag to light circumstances most harrowing to his feelings, most repugnant to his better nature, but he never in the whole course of that career remembered to have felt more poignant pain than on this occasion.

A gentleman, a man of family, and he was instructed of fortune, appeared before them accused of one of the most hideous crimes

inscribed amongst our statutes, a crime which struck at the root of one of our most valued privileges, that invaded the sanctity of our homes, and threw to the winds the proud boast of Englishmen, that though the rain and the wind of heaven might invade his dwelling, yet not even the sovereign dared to force an entrance.

The learned gentleman, having in some measure got over his sorrow and reluctance, went on to describe the subsequent acts of the house-breakers, for it was not to be supposed that the person was alone in the transaction, though hitherto the officers of justice had failed in tracing his companions. He described how the bed-chamber of females had been ruthlessly entered; how raving maniacs had been released for the purposes of confusion and probably of murder; how the proprietor and his assistants had been mercilessly beaten, treated with continued indignity, and finally escaping with life only by the

accident of one of them getting access to the alarm bell. He then went on to identify me with the transaction ; how I took lodgings the day before ; how I came in company with the identical patient who had escaped ; how we were seen in a cart with two other persons, the same evening on the road from the asylum to London ; how a man had marked me and the female distinguished by the remarkable peculiarity of a white hat, to descend from a cart in a certain street, from whence we were taken in a hackney-coach to the street where I had engaged the lodgings ; and having made me out to be as great a villain as possible, proceeded to call his witnesses.

The first was the keeper of the asylum, who described how his premises had been broken into, and how the lady had been carried off ; how he had been awoken by the rush of madmen into his bed-room, dragged out of bed, belaboured with his own boots, forced into a strait-waistcoat, crowned with a diadem rarely

applied to the head, and which being bonnetted down with unnecessary vigour, had not only caused him extreme pain and inconvenience, as might be seen from the abrasion of skin upon his forehead and nose, but necessitated the fracture of the crown before he could be released from his mock sovereignty, besides being put in bodily fear. But he had never seen the prisoner at the bar. He was dismissed without cross-examination.

The keeper came next, and his evidence was much to the same effect. I did not venture to cast my eyes towards Mr. Hussey during this examination, and was rather provoked at his folly in running the risk of recognition, especially as his convulsions of merriment drew upon him some censure from the Court.

Then came the landlady and her servant, who clearly identified me as the man who came with the lady of the white hat, as did the hackney-coachman. A man was then produced who had seen two gentlemen, one in a white

hat, descend from a cart in the street where the coach had taken us up, but also persisted in the assertion that he of the hat was no female, from the fact of nothing appearing but legs below the cloak.

Ann Grice then stepped forward, a new witness to me. She lived near a cross-country road, leading westward from the high road to Harrow. On the morning in question she got up early, to wash at Mr. Stokes's, a farmer: in crossing the road, a cart passed her, containing four men, one of whom wore a white hat. The cart came from the direction of the madhouse; from which, however, the place was some miles distant. Could not identify any of the men. Could not think it possible that the one in the white hat was a woman. Should say it was impossible, because women never wore white hats that she ever heard of. Knew a man by his hat, as much as a woman by her bonnet and petticoats. Knew a counsellor by his wig. Should as soon expect a female to wear a wig



as a white hat. Thought it possible there might be some old woman amongst them. Knew a judge from a counsellor, because the one did not ask so many foolish questions as the other.

Cross-examined: Many persons wore white hats, especially in the country. Saw young Mr. Stokes in a white hat the day before yesterday. Could swear it wasn't Stokes in the cart. Knew it because she knew it. The Stokes's did not get up at that time in the morning. Did not see young Stokes in bed that morning. Was not in the habit of going into gentlemen's rooms before they were up. Took in washing, and went out to wash. Had had a sweetheart once. He married Sally James. Did not scratch Sally's eyes out. Kept herself to herself. Had had a misfortune, but that was nothing to nobody. There were plenty of roads the cart might have come by without coming from the madhouse. Had never been at the madhouse. Knew where-

abouts it was. Hoped she should never go there. Did not think a cross-examination would make her mad enough for that. Believed it was a man in the white hat, and should think so to her dying day. Never saw the prisoner to her knowledge before. Did not think he was a likely person to be in a cart. It was something like a butcher's cart. Felt quite sure the prisoner was not in the cart.

Here ended the case for the prosecution ; the prisoner called no witnesses.

The learned judge summed up the evidence. He informed the jury that the prisoner was clearly identified as the person who took the lodgings, and came to them with the insane female who had escaped from the madhouse, and by the oath of the proprietor and his keepers, she could not have escaped but by the assistance of some persons, that a forcible entry of the premises was clearly proved, and a person wearing a white hat, seen on the road from the madhouse in a cart with three

others, seen also again in London to descend from a cart, and was taken in company with the prisoner to the street where he had previously taken lodgings, under pretence of bringing his mother from the country. It was for the jury to decide whether this evidence went to establish the prisoner's share in the burglary, and the subsequent transactions constituting the crime laid to his charge or not. If they thought the evidence sufficient to criminate him, they would find their verdict accordingly ; if, on the other hand, they considered the evidence insufficient, they would acquit him.

The jury put their heads together for ten minutes, and then requested for permission to retire, the judge also went out for a little refreshment, and the wigs began to nod and bob, and lean towards each other as before.

For two mortal hours did that sagacious jury ponder over the case. At last they came in again, looking extremely wise and satisfied,

They had agreed upon their verdict, and that verdict was "Not Guilty." There was considerable applause in the Court, during which I felt my hands cordially grasped on either side, and many kind speeches addressed to me.

A loud shout was set up outside, and we were received with much favour by the hearty unwashed in the street. I thought it a good opportunity to repay my kind friend Hall for his agreeable banterings, by making him the hero of the day—a distinction which must be agreeable, since it is so eagerly sought after—so taking off my hat I cheered with the best of them, keeping my eyes still on my friend. In a moment he had a hundred hands thrust upon him, not of the very cleanest; and the last glimpse I caught of him was when being embraced, under circumstances of peculiar endearment, by three fishwomen at once.

Having shaken myself clear of the mob, I took a coach and drove to my uncle's, determined to make no difference in my be-

haviour to him, though he had left me to be hanged rather than take the trouble of interfering.

The door was opened by Allen the valet, a fellow I had never liked, notwithstanding his extreme civility. On this occasion he was more obsequious than ever, his bows more profound, and his rejoicings, and inquiries as to my health, even more exuberant than they were wont to be; yet underneath these lurked an intelligence and a smiling consciousness of power, which I readily detected through the mask.

My uncle was at home and alone. He received me very much in his usual manner, excepting that he gave me only two fingers instead of the whole hand, as heretofore: asking me to sit down, he suddenly left the room, I had no doubt for the purpose of washing those two fingers. On his return, he took a seat as far from me as possible, and felt such an oppression, that though the weather was very far from sultry, he felt it

necessary to open one of the windows for the benefit of a little fresh air. I apologised for having been the cause of any inconvenience to him, but he waived the subject.

“ I was not, certainly,” he said, “ much flattered at being supposed the accomplice of Mr. William Davis, in a case of housebreaking, neither did the visit of the Bow Street officer, while I was staying at the Duke’s, afford me the least gratification ; but I have nothing to complain of. I should, however, recommend you to get rid of all the clothes you had with you in the gaol, for fear of the fever, which, I am told, prevails in such places. I don’t know what to say about Elphick : I should think, under the circumstances, he would hesitate to take an order, but you can try. I am afraid that some of my plans must be altered in consequence of this affair. It will be impossible that you can exchange into the Guards. I should not like to interfere in such a case, and as for your

coming in for Fastanloose, why you know the thing is hardly now to be thought of. Consider what they would say at the hustings. The mere electors might be quiet enough, but then they never go to the hustings; and the rabble of course would be set on by some fellow on the opposite side to abuse us. You know that my opinion is, a gentleman is best distinguished by keeping aloof. I know of no word which expresses my meaning so well as aloof; a certain reserve and retirement is essential to the character. He keeps himself aloof from vulgar fashion and vulgar people; aloof even from his friends and intimates by an exclusive and peculiar style, above all things, aloof from damaging reports, familiarity, or a too close intimacy: but perhaps even more than this—aloof from ridicule, which is entirely fatal to a man, if once fairly fixed upon him, no matter what the subject may be. Think of our position, if a man at the election were to hold up a pair of hand-cuffs,

or exhibit a miniature gallows, or even to say :  
‘ How’s your friend Davis ? ’ ”

“ Why in that case, my dear uncle, I should certainly take upon myself to pull the fellow’s nose.”

“ There you would be wrong,” said my uncle. “ Contact is always to be avoided, even with the intervention of a whip, or stick, or a boot ; but nose-pulling is nasty, especially in cold weather, even with the advantage of a change of gloves immediately after. Besides these things lead to exertion, perspiration, and other vulgarities, and a gentleman never perspires, or is flushed in the face, or excited ; or even angry : scarcely anything can excuse it. In the line I am told such things occur, but very rarely indeed in the household troops, or at good clubs.”

“ But, my dear uncle, I am acquitted, and no man dare accuse me of what a jury has pronounced me not guilty of.”

“ True, very true, but the reports in the



papers, the talk at the clubs, the undoubted fact of the trial, the having travelled in a cart, doubtless with inferior persons, and sitting at breakfast with a female in a shaved head and spectacles, and who besides wore a white hat in public, known besides to be our relation—why these things can never be got over. The very fact of my having a sister, or you an aunt, capable of masquerading about the country in such a head-dress is quite enough to get us black-balled at any decent club, let alone her having been proved to belong to a madhouse. How could we even get over the exhibition of a strait-waistcoat at Fastanloose, or a picture representing the mad doctor crowned in the way he reported himself to have been, surrounded by a circle of dangerous lunatics, partially clothed in straw? It could not be done. As it is, I never walk down the street without expecting to see myself or you in the print shops, with a jemmy sticking out of our pockets, hand in hand with these filthy naked creatures,

and mixed up in their infernal orgies. I am not quite sure," continued my uncle in a musing mood, "if it would not have been almost better if you had been hanged, because the solemnity of the thing would have put a stop to some of the ridicule—except, of course, at the hustings, where nothing would stop them. It is, undoubtedly, a vulgar thing to be hanged, and a man often does low things under such circumstances, as shaking hands with the executioner, and that kind of trash. And it would not have been pleasant for me to have read in the newspapers of your having a cotton night-cap drawn over your face, and how you passed the night, or what appetite you had for breakfast, or to hear your last dying speech and confession bawled out under my windows; but still, as I said before, there is a certain solemnity in the thing, which might put down a portion of the ridicule. A good-natured friend may now come up and say to me in the street or at a club, ' Featherstone, I congratulate you with all my

soul that your nephew was not hanged,' and I could not notice it except with thanks, for it is in point of fact what a man may congratulate you on, without your being able to take notice of it, though intended for an insult ; but in the other case nobody could with propriety have alluded to the subject at all, so really I am almost inclined to think your acquittal was scarcely desirable. Elphick would have been very much disgusted at pantaloons of his cut becoming the property of the executioner ; I could never have introduced another person to him after that I am quite sure, even if he had not declined my custom in consequence.

“ You see now,” continued my uncle, after a pause, “ what a disadvantage all this is to you. I could not possibly ask you to walk in the street with me—not that I, individually, should mind it—but people would nod and whisper at the club windows, ‘ there goes the man that was tried for housebreaking and his uncle ;’ or ‘ I suppose Featherstone’s taking his

nephew to André's to buy a new hat for his aunt;' or 'their female relation is so fond of male attire that she must have been quite at home in a strait-waistcoat;' or 'I wonder they did not introduce her as a partner for one of the lunatics, in the little hop they got up at the madhouse;' or 'I think I shall go to Featherstone's coach-house, and see the new sporting cart his nephew has set up.' Imagine my meeting the Prince with a house-breaker on my arm!" and hereupon he went to the window, after scattering some scent about the room.

I thought it of little use to quarrel with my fastidious relative; but I experienced a sincere regret at the altered position in which we stood to each other; and I felt very strongly, though not quite for the first time, that sickening disappointment at discovering in my nearest friend and relative a full share of that coldhearted selfishness, of which people are ready enough to accuse the world in general,

though carefully excluding themselves and friends.

I thought it now high time to take leave, to save any further expenditure of Eau-de-Cologne, so merely stated my intention of returning at once to my regiment, after presenting myself at the Horse Guards.

“For God’s sake,” said my uncle, “don’t go to the Duke’s *levée* in your gaol clothes: consider, his life is valuable, and what a talk it would make to have the infection traced to us !”

I assured him I would take every precaution, and with a hearty grasp on my part of his two fingers, descended his stairs for the last time, my uncle hastily going to his dressing-room to wash away the taint of my touch.

When I called upon the adjutant-general, he recommended me to present myself at the commander-in-chief’s *levée*, and to call at once upon the military secretary. From the friendly tone of the officials, I had no great

reason to fear an unfavourable reception from the chief.

His Royal Highness received me with a bluff dignity of manner, wholly apart from pride, and more assumed than real. There was a manly frankness about him that I liked. He began the conference by saying how much he regretted having heard of the painful position in which I had been placed ; but had all along felt satisfied that, notwithstanding the unfavourable reports which had found their way into the newspapers, an officer of my character, and belonging to so distinguished a regiment, could not deserve the disparaging things which had been said of him. He was convinced that I could clear myself of every moral taint which attached to the transaction, as entirely as the jury had acquitted me of the actual crime laid to my charge.

I saw plainly enough that the Duke's curiosity was craving to be gratified, and that I could do no great harm in telling him all

about it, without betraying the name of Mr. Hussey, who, as a pensioner, and as yet untried, I did not choose to compromise. After a time, His Royal Highness did not attempt to disguise the interest he felt in the story, especially that relative to our visiting the cells. He passed his hand over his mouth when I came to the part where the madmen were let loose, and found it impossible to pinch his features into gravity when we came to the deplorable condition of the doctor and his assistants.

Upon the whole, I had every reason to be gratified with my reception, the Duke merely characterizing my conduct as "thoughtless;" and adding with a pleasant smile, "I suppose I need scarcely caution you against any further attempt to release your unfortunate relation, at least by similar means."

The next day I was informed that a satisfactory statement of my case had been forwarded to the commanding officer of the

regiment, and I might now rejoin without fear of unpleasant consequences.

I cannot say that my private funds were in any very flourishing condition just at that moment. The money bestowed upon my accomplices, and the expense of the trial, left me without the means of returning to France, without an advance of money from the agents, which indeed there was no difficulty in procuring after my favourable interview at the Horse Guards. My uncle had made me no offer of assistance in any way, but I attributed this to his pique at the notoriety which I had brought upon him, and doubted nothing of seeing some slight addition to my usual allowance, which I drew every quarter from his banker's, without reference to him; a plan of his own proposing.

I found the regiment scattered about in cantonments round about a small village, which contained the head-quarters and two companies; my own company occupying a



wretched hamlet some four miles off. It was composed of half a dozen farm-houses, seemingly congregated with their attendant out-buildings for mutual protection. The houses did not show their faces honestly to the road, but stood towards it at every imaginable angle, like a set of sulky children turning their backs upon what they disbelieve or were ashamed of. The walls were of mud, the roofs of thatch, and the inhabitants miserable in the extreme. Their food was principally black bread, which toasting would hardly dry, and an apple; varied by wretched soup and a few haricot beans. The house was filthy, without an attempt at ornament, garden or enclosed space of any kind. There was no shop in the place, but every day a speculator from the larger village brought a cartful of luxuries, such as tobacco, coffee, sugar, &c., much to his own profit, and our satisfaction.

The country was nearly flat, and the road went straight from one horizon to the other,

like a long gash across the landscape. A more dreary, cultivated country I never saw ; no houses above the wretched farm buildings I have mentioned, no country gentlemen, everybody of the better class huddling into the towns.

About two months after my return, I drew as usual on my uncle's bankers for the quarterly allowance, and got my draft cashed by the paymaster. In due course of post it came back protected with "no order" written on it. I wrote immediately to my uncle, but in the meantime a sad conviction crept over me that the money was stopped by him, and the "no order" meant in reality orders not to pay. I received an answer in a week's time. The letter was written in the usual style, but short ; it was headed also as his letters always had been, but there was a cold, impassive manner about it, which I felt left me nothing to hope. He regretted extremely that, in consequence of the irregularity of his rents, he should be unable to afford me the assistance he had been accus-

tomed to do, hoped I was quite well, pleased with my quarters, said the times were bad, great distress and difficulty felt by all classes, and remained my affectionate uncle.

It is bad enough to be abandoned by one's only friend, but the bitter drop is rendered infinitely more intense by the feeling that you are sold into the bargain. I had been taken from my original profession, embarked in a line of life which I had never thought of, and tacitly encouraged to believe that the man who had done so, meant to push me forward in the profession which he had himself selected for me. He had buoyed me up with hope till it was too late to return; had towed my little bark till I "pursued his triumph" in the representation of Fastanloose, and then suddenly cut the painter when within sight of port—a port never to be attained without his assistance, even if I could float at all.

I wrote him a long letter, in which I called up such eloquence as was in me, to represent

the extreme cruelty of the case; and to hope and trust that one foolish action, caused by feelings of gratitude for a person who had been kind to me, and that person his own sister, would surely not be considered a sufficient ground for withdrawing the kindness with which he had hitherto treated me—in fact, I said all I could think of, and received a letter even more insulting than the last. He said, he thought he had explained his meaning with sufficient clearness, but probably from the stronger language of the persons with whom I had lately associated, I might attach an ambiguous or undecided meaning to the phraseology he had used. He regretted this mistake, and he referred me to his former letter, which contained his ultimate intentions regarding me. He then wrote a sentence or two about the London season, which was expected to be early that year, and subscribed himself as before.

Now, I flatter myself I am as much of a philosopher as any one in the sense of being

indifferent to the hard rubs of this world ; but I could not fail to be moved by the loss of three hundred pounds a year, and a prospective two thousand pounds, to say nothing of the seat for Fastanloose. All those, I saw, were lost for ever. I had to deal with one of those cool, passionless people who have no feelings to move, no sympathies to stir up—so I took a thick stick, and walked twenty miles across the stiffest country I could find by way of beating down the devil, which I felt was rising in me. I thought this course preferable either to cutting my throat, or horsewhipping my uncle ; but I imagine that if there had been any tongues in the trees of that dreary country, they would have unloosed them in a lecture for the bad language I used towards him.

I took many more walks before I finally settled upon the course I should pursue : whether to abandon my present profession and revert to the old one. But here a legal point rose up against me. My father's £1600 had been left expressly for the purchase of my next

step, and was lodged in the hands of trustees for that sole purpose ; and in the event of my death without that object being attained, was to go to somebody else. It became then a question with me, whether I should not forfeit the money by leaving His Majesty's service, or, what was equally bad, whether the trustees, for their own security, would not throw themselves upon the protection of the Court of Chancery, file a friendly bill—a mere matter of form—absolutely necessary in so doubtful a case ; and, after some fifteen or twenty years, during which a great number of legal gentlemen would be laying their heads together, filing more bills, putting the case before the master, and taking it away again ; it would at last be decided, the decision bringing another feature of the case to light, that the £1600 would barely pay the costs of the two highly respectable legal firms employed. Still I thought it advisable to take a higher opinion than my own : so requested the trustees to get, at my expense, the opinion of an eminent counsel, for whom a full case was

made out, accompanied by my father's will. The learned gentleman, after a fortnight's cogitation, returned a most confident answer to the effect that the trustees were clearly justified in handing me over the money in case I abandoned the service. I then enclosed the same case and will to my agents, and requested them, through their solicitor, to procure an opinion from another first-rate authority; and the result was, that he as confidently told me that the trustees would incur the greatest risk in so doing, and, in his opinion, would be wholly unjustified in diverting the money from its expressed purpose; although an ingenious argument might, he pleasantly observed, be made out upon some points on the other side. I did not think it necessary to inquire further, but resolved to secure my money by the purchase of the step, rather than risk it in the exposition of ingenious arguments; although my resolution might perhaps cause the loss of a year or two.

Promotion came sooner than I expected;

and I almost immediately exchanged into another regiment, not caring to exhibit my altered circumstances to my old corps. And I was the more decided in this, by another significant circumstance, in which I recognized the hand of my uncle. My three tailors, my bootmaker, and hatter, including cap and accoutrement maker, sent me in each their little bills (as they pleasantly, and very disparagingly called them), which had accumulated ever since I came of age, and now amounted to a very respectable aggregate sum, considering it was to be liquidated out of my pay. All these had been previously paid by my uncle—in fact, had never appeared in any separate account to me. But he had strange notions of paying debts. He never paid a debt quite off; but handed in, as the whim took him, certain sums, more or less, on account. He never dealt in odd sums; and I believe was never known to draw a cheque with any fraction of a pound in it. Sometimes he overpaid; and if a bill came to ninety pounds



odd, he always gave a cheque for the hundred, letting the overplus wait upon some future order.

With two short, sharp, and I then thought, rather brilliant exceptions, no further letters passed between my uncle and myself. The little correspondence flared up like the unwholesome flash of an expiring candle, and then sunk to rise no more, leaving us in the worst of odour as regarded each other.

I wrote for some clothes I had left at his house, and civilly requested they might be forwarded to an address I gave in London. In reply to this, my uncle informed me that he had given the clothes away to his servant, and that I ought to congratulate myself that they went into such respectable hands, considering the narrow escape they had had of becoming the possession of so very different a person. In answer to this, I wrote that having to pay for the clothes myself, I thought I had some right to be consulted as to their disposition; and that however respectable the individual might be to

whom they were consigned, yet the law looked upon the receiver of stolen goods to be as bad as the thief. I then took the liberty of suggesting that as he seemed disposed to make a man of fashion of his valet at the expense of other people, he had better bring him in for the borough of Fastanloose—where, from his high respectability, he would be a worthy successor to one who profited by the false imprisonment of a sister, and discarded a nephew for performing a generous action.

I flattered myself, at that inconsiderate age, in having parried smartly in tierce, and returned a flanconnade which had him on the hip ; losing sight of that great maxim, that we should deal with our enemies, as if they were one day to become our friends, and exhibiting the bad taste of having followed an example in vulgarity, which, I confess, I was at the time surprised at, but now am at no loss to attribute to the teaching of the “respectable” Mr. Allen, the valet.

## CHAPTER III.

## A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT.

I RETURNED to London, preparatory to joining my new regiment; and presenting myself at the Horse Guards, found no difficulty in procuring six months' leave of absence, for the purpose of travelling abroad, and improving myself in foreign languages and military sciences—a plea which in those days was very rarely refused, even for much longer periods than I had asked for. Though, from the little progress which some gentlemen of my acquaintance made in those two branches of human learning, they would never have been suspected of having crossed the Channel.

Choosing a companion of habits as vagabond

as my own, I wandered forth into the north of France, and gradually wandered westward. We tried several places, with a view to settling for the winter in a quiet family. We tarried at boarding-houses, spent a month or so with a *gaillard* of a Curé, who had passed many years in England, and affected the character of a man of the world—and indeed of fashion, as far as his close-breasted robe would admit of it. He was a horseman, too, Monsieur le Curé, the only sporting member of the Romish Church which I met abroad; and who had some intention of getting up a pack of beagles to hunt in the neighbourhood of his living, the vine-stumps being, however, rather unfavourable to straight riding. This was at a small town in the province of Maine, on the confines of the great royal forest of Bercé, where, by favour of the keepers, we were permitted to shoot woodcocks at will, and even admitted of the companies which went out to the *grandes chasses*, some half dozen of which took place during the winter.

And a great *chasse* it truly was! composed

of from fifty to a hundred persons, one half of whom were probably provided with fire-arms—and such fire-arms ! The rest were armed with poles, having spikes at the end to stop the onslaught of a wounded boar ; and almost every man had a dog of some kind, generally of the “*matin*” or mastiff breed, selected as much with a view of protecting his master as for the purpose of starting game, which, indeed, they never attempted, though ready enough to follow it in a slow fashion when once on foot.

Then those armed with poles, and a few gunners amongst them, made a circuit, so as to enter the forest at a distant place ; and cutting off, as it were, a certain portion of it, to drive the game towards ; the better-armed and more aristocratic sportsmen with the guns. When the time had arrived, due notice was given by the royal keepers, dressed in much of the antique pageantry of Louis XV., and escorted by mounted gendarmes, and to the solemn music of French horns we entered the forest.

Although the keepers strongly insisted upon the necessity of shooting at nothing less than a

roe-buck, or at any rate a hare or a fox, in fact I believe such a practice was strictly defended, yet such was the impatient eagerness of the sportsmen that nothing could restrain them. They longed to try their guns; they had been bringing them up to objects animate and inanimate, outside the cover, without firing; but being once in, and the keepers comparatively distant, they let fly at the first living thing that offered a sitting shot. Woe to the blackbird who perched in their proximity, to the squirrel who paused within their reach; even to the robin or tom-tit who offered himself in any remarkably favourable attitude.

From the moment we entered, there was a perpetual fire at something or other, and what with French horns, the fusillade, the shouts of the chasseurs, and the yelling of the *matins*, such a scene of hubbub and confusion I have nowhere else witnessed. Deer, and boar, roe-buck and hares, rushed hither and thither; now and then an old grey wolf was seen stealing along, but we seldom succeeded in shooting one, except in very severe weather,

when they seem to lay aside some of their caution. We rarely failed of a boar or two, as well as deer and roebuck.

After a short trial of Monsieur le Curé's, we settled in the house of a most amiable old lady, one of the most perfect gentlewomen I ever met in my life. The descendant of an ancient family, and possessed of large estates before the Revolution, she still kept possession of an ancient mansion in the small town, though almost every vestige of land was in the possession of others. This still retained the old worm-eaten furniture; it had been fitted up within the time of Louis-le-Grand. The silken draperies and damask hangings, whatever might have been their original colour, were faded to an ashy green, and swept the bare brick floors unconscious for years of mat or carpet. The tapestry with which every room was hung, dated ages before that; in fact, from the costume of the hawkers and hunters, those urging their round fat horses to catch the heron that was being struck to the ground, those engaged in the last deadly

struggle with boars more formidable than any produced in these degenerate days, but doubtless worked by fair hands from specimens brought home from the neighbouring forest. Every floor in the house, and even the staircase was of brick, and as the servants, and even Madame, wore *sabots*, the clattering was excessive.

What stories she told us of the horrors of the Revolution, all of which I implicitly believed, and do so still: horrors which have found no place in history, and which I could find no language to describe, but which our venerable hostess narrated in the plain-spoken, circumstantial, unwincing phraseology of a century back. Then the tapestry furnished us with *Mémoires pour servir* for a large portion of the history of France. The De Tourville, who was flying his hawk, or killing his boar, was the friend and companion of Henri IV., or François I. One perished in the great Jacquerie of the fourteenth century; another lost everything but his honour at Pavia. This, assisted at the affair of St. Bartholomew;



that, had charged at the head of Turenne's cavalry.

A month or so after we arrived, it came out that my room—that is, my bed-room, and our common sitting-room—had been the scene of a dreadful tragedy: was, in fact, the haunted room of the house, and never spoken of by the inmates without solemnity and awe. Even Monsieur le Curé put on a more serious tone when he came to speak of that apartment; and as for Nannette or Jacques entering it after nine at night, such a thing was never asked or expected. There, on those very bricks, in some tumult of the Fronde, had been stabbed to death the gentleman who figured upon the canvas between the windows; the tumult being excited, and the rabble urged to the deed by an enemy of the De Tourvilles and of the government, but to whose daughter the murdered man was secretly affianced. I was often asked how I slept; if the wind had disturbed me; if it had blown open the door or window? It was natural to expect a ghost in such a house, but the particulars were not imparted till we seemed

too firmly settled for spirits to drive us away : then it came out that the hapless maiden had sickened and faded away in a few months after the death of her lover, and from that time forth they were accustomed to meet at some dead hour of the night in that apartment. The door—and such a door I never saw except attached to a church, or some public building ; it was at least twelve feet high—slowly, but noiselessly, opened, and a lady of surpassing fairness glided into the apartment. Alabaster, or the driven snow, were not whiter than her face, her neck, her hands ; the wing of the raven afforded but an inadequate idea of the pall-like blackness of her eyes and hair. Stopping at the foot of the bed, which was midway between the door and the tapestry between the windows, it was her custom softly to raise her hand with a beckoning motion to the tapestry, whereupon the leading figure descended to the floor to meet her, and they stood together on the spot even yet stained with his blood. What passages of love or of ceremony then took place, no one of the many witnesses to their meeting

had retained their senses long enough to observe; but when they recovered them the heavy door was closed, the fair Frondeuse departed, and the gentleman was as intent as ever on the active business of the chase.

Even in the winter evenings, when Jacques came by candle-light, and threw the door open with the air of a Seneschal to say, "*Messieurs, vous êtes servis,*" he cast a glance at the picture to see that the figure was safe in his place, and stamped hastily down the stairs before us on his timber feet, as if he expected it was coming down in our company. That I never witnessed these meetings is, I suppose, to be attributed to my heavy sleep, though not incurious on the subject of beauty even in a ghost, or of the manner in which lovers met in the days of the Fronde.

But we were not wholly driven to the spiritual world for society. About New Year's Day and Twelfth Night, Madame collected her few friends around her, some from great distances. They had mostly gone down in the world like herself, but were not the less merry

on that account. We had games such as I now know no name for, involving the most surprising forfeits, and a round of blind-man's-buff which included old and young, even Madame herself, which for hearty romping I never saw exceeded elsewhere.

On one of these occasions we were called upon for a plum pudding, a mysterious dish, upon which, in conjunction with *rost bif*, all Englishmen were supposed daily and almost hourly to feed upon. That our achievement of the national dish was respectable it would be idle modesty in me to deny, especially as the strong proverbial test of the excellence of all puddings was so satisfactorily applied that none of it survived that dinner. Monsieur le Curé, not to be outdone, volunteered a bowl of punch—English punch! such as had never been dreamed of in that small retired town before. That he succeeded to a degree that almost eclipsed the popularity of the pudding, I am free to confess; but it had this effect upon him, probably arising from a too sedulous attention to the meeting of the strong waters

which composed it, that he was far more often caught at *colin maillard* than anybody else, or that so active a *gaillard* could otherwise have been; and yet when he caught any one himself, it was rarely the elderly or more decrepid females who stood most in his way.

At length, when spring arrived, we took an affectionate leave of our kind and venerable hostess, never to see her more, for she died before we revisited that place again. She had kept, as she truly said, her last Christmas—the happiest, so she was pleased to say, since the days of the Terror. With stick in hand and knapsack on shoulder, we sallied forth on our adventures.

These it is not my intention to inflict upon the reader, except in a brief and sketchy form. We passed through a dreary country of sand and pine, to Blois and Orleans—at which latter place we joined with two young Frenchmen, one an *enseign de vaisseau*, to hire a boat, and taking with us the owner to steer and take care of her on the way, to pull ourselves down

the Loire to Nantes, a distance of a hundred leagues.

A boat to all appearance less calculated for such a party of pleasure it would have been difficult to select; it was not very unlike, though on a smaller scale, the pleasure-boats on the river Wye. It had a shed in the centre, which, together with the boat itself, was run up of rough unpainted deal. It was the curious trade of the man who built it, to construct such rough boats, which he either sold at once to persons going down the river; or took a cargo, or passengers, the whole or part of the way, then returned and built another, to be similarly disposed of. With a fair wind he hoisted a temporary shoulder-of-mutton sail upon one of the oars, and so ran before it; but as the wind was dead from the westward or a calm in our case, we had to trust wholly to the oars and stream.

The first night we landed and slept at a water-side inn, somewhere above Tours. We pulled only two oars at a time, the Frenchmen

pulling together; but they soon quarrelled, accused each other of shirking the work, so an Englishman and a Frenchman from thenceforth pulled together, to the entire satisfaction of our friends. After the first night, we made no halt except for meals, or to run ashore for an hour in the old towns on the way—Tours, Saumur, and Angers—till we came to Nantes, pulling two hours at a spell, night and day. The weather was extremely beautiful, and the broad moon flashed upon the river till it rivalled almost the sombre daylight of our murky climate.

From Nantes we walked through La Vendée, a country at that time altogether out of the way of travellers, and where the people assembled to look at an Englishman as they would at some rare animal. A close and difficult country, full of ancient as well as modern ruins, infamous roads, mostly covered with wood, and intersected with brawling, rocky rivers. We came out into great plains at Moncontour, where the peasantry knew, by tradition, that a battle had been fought between the French and Eng-

lish, beneath the old square tower that lords it over the place ; but who were the leaders, or who the winners, or for what cause they fought, was not remembered in their simple annals.

At Poitiers, we naturally inquired as to the scene of a still more famous engagement, and our landlord referred us to the Dean, reputed a high authority in antiquarian lore, and few others knew anything about it. We called upon his very reverence, who kindly showed us a map he had made of the scene of action, marking the villages in the neighbourhood, which was about two leagues off. He was familiar, and handed them down for our inspection and reference. He then lent us his map, and directed us to a farmer on the spot, whom he had partly qualified as a guide to the very few who required his services. The French and English positions were marked out as far as practicable on the Dean's map ; and we stood in fancy, if not in reality, upon the very spot where the English archers, lining the hedges and bank of the deep hollow way up which the flower of the French chivalry charged, and



were so signally overthrown by the pitiless shower. Pieces of old iron, spurs, and helmets, the farmer told us, were sometimes found ; but as the French plough is a mere scratcher of the surface, many relics are not to be expected.

From Poitiers we went to Angoulême, situated on a commanding eminence in the plain ; from thence to the clean little town of Cognac, and subsequently to Bordeaux. It would be idle to give a description of places now, perhaps, wholly changed.

Thence we steered to Perigeux and Montignac, of which some mention has previously been made. Thence to Brives le Gaillard, from its gay situation, and Tulle, celebrated for the beauty of its women. The infinite number of nightingales between this place and Bordeaux was such as to “murder sleep,” except in some low situations, where the frogs fairly beat them out of the field. Onwards by Egleton, Usel, Lastique, generally a most dreary country of wild heaths, a scanty population, speaking little or no French, and in some places so inconveniently religious, that even the innkeepers

would allow no meat to be cooked or eaten in their houses on a fast-day. The mountain streams abounded with most excellent trout, and I have no doubt that game of some kind is to be found in the wide, solitary heaths. The reasonableness of the charges in this country astonished us. At Tulle, a considerable town, our hotel expenses scarcely amounted to one shilling and sixpence a day. The people are of a race wholly different from other French; smaller, shorter, dirtier and poorer: I should imagine also more inattentive, or less wide awake, for all the clocks in the country strike the hour twice. I would recommend any traveller in this country to be provided with a pocket compass, for the paths through the heath, besides being very indistinct, intersect each other in all directions.

From Lastique to Ceca (no doubt from *Cac*, blind, hidden), we were absolutely lost in a fog, and obliged to wait for hours till it cleared a little. Although within a league of the Puy de Dome, we were unable at Ceca to see a vestige of that mountain. It is almost worth

while to take a journey to Gélé, a village three leagues east of Ceca, to eat the delicious bread made there. There is nothing of the kind in France or Italy, still less in England, to compare with it. Nor was there any extraordinary sauce of hunger more brought into play here than elsewhere; a condiment indeed seldom wanting to men who walk daily from twenty-five to thirty-five miles.

It is perhaps from the eyes being of comparatively little use in the fogs of Ceca, that people are driven to make appeals to the other senses. At an early hour we were awoke by a drum and tambourine played "dry," or without any more musical accompaniment, under our window. When a sufficient crowd was collected, a priest, in full canonical, mounted on a heap of stones, and gave out that he would preach at a certain place the same evening, at three o'clock. The audience crossed themselves, his reverence descended; and, preceded by his two vile rub-a-dub performers, moved on to another conspicuous station.

We found our way to the top of the Puy de

Dome, though to little advantage in point of view. The summit was above the fog, but the whole plain seemed a sea of white wool, the tops of the hills rising like islands.

The situation of Clermont is extremely good ; standing in a beautiful plain surrounded by hills, and the Puy de Dome rising within a league of it. We here found again the delicious spring temperature we had left at Bordeaux. The town is excellent, the hotels good, the public buildings handsome, and the water comes straight from the mountains. One stream in the neighbourhood has the property of depositing a stony substratum, which encrusts everything it touches. The grass, the rushes, the branches that touch its waters, stand ever afterwards in solid stone. It has even done more—it has built itself a bridge of massive freestone two hundred feet long, without the slightest assistance from any other engineer or architect. With a little instruction, it is impossible to say what it might not do : build itself a line of quays, for instance, docks, wharves, or even run up a house with

a little persuasion. A speculator had encrusted a dead horse with it, which was thus rendered perpetual in stone body-clothes and leggings, and he exhibited his stone-horse for a five-sous piece. He consulted us upon the propriety of bringing him to London, having heard perhaps that in England any monster will make a man; when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian—and why not a stone-horse? Not having as yet heard of such an arrival at the Egyptian Hall, I presume our friend took our advice. The name of Pascal is common in Clermont. The walk to the Grotto of Royat is charming, up a narrow woody glen by the clear stream, the neat villages and mills almost buried under enormous oaks. From hence the many fountains of Clermont are supplied. A curiosity is pointed out in a large natural bank of earth filled with grains of burnt wheat:

“Not that the thing is either rich or rare,

We wonder how the devil it came there!”

no doubt in some eruption of this volcanic country when the bank was in the state of mud, and subsequently appeared in its present position. I know of few places more inviting as a residence than Clermont ; from the great natural beauty of the neighbourhood, called also le Pays de Cocaigue from its fertility, fine climate, cleanliness, bread and water.

The Puy is seen to great advantage from Pont-le-Château, seven leagues eastward. It rises with great majesty behind the town of Clermont.

The little town of Tiers, a great knife-manufactory stands in a narrow ravine of the mountains. The houses have roofs so broad, as nearly to cover the narrow streets, a great advantage in the sudden heavy rains, incident to its situation.

Let no one explore this country who is sensitive on the score of bed-fellows—of the insect tribe: they are legion. Neither is this place without its drawbacks to one of acute auricular nerves. The timber is carted down from the mountain in vehicles whose wheels are never

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greased, and half a dozen of them together can be heard for half a league.

Having taken no pledge against strong liquors, we turned out of our way to visit the famous wine spring of St Galmier, refusing the pure mountain springs on our way that we might the better appreciate it. Seated by the well was an elderly female with a jug in her hand, evidently about to make an evening of it. Requesting her to help herself and pass the wine, we gave it a fair trial. It has, no doubt, a vinous smack, succeeded by an aftertaste not quite so good, and is not without a little sweetness and subdued acidity. I should say there is not a headache in a hogshead of it.

To the bustling, begrimed coal-black town of St. Etienne—the little Birmingham of France—filling the air with its emancipated blacks, and depositing unconsumed carbon upon the trees, the cattle and the people of the neighbourhood.

Those who visit St. Etienne, should make

a point of ascending Mount Pilate, it is even worth a visit from Lyons, the view from the summit of which is one of the finest I ever saw. Looking towards the West is the Puy de Dome, the Mont d'Or, the whole range of the Auvergne mountains, but the grand view is towards the east. At your feet is the great plain of Lyons, dotted with towns and villages, abounding in wood, and the majestic Rhone flowing through the midst. Beyond the plain is the vast chain of the Alps, the snowy peaks rising one above another, and stretching on either hand till they fade into distance. I can conceive nothing finer than this. The very top of the mountain is a jumble of large blocks of bare, grey granite, easy enough to ascend, as a rough irregular staircase, the steps of which are a yard or so high.

As the walk from St. Etienne is rather a long one, and it is not easy to tear oneself from such a scene, we purposed to halt for the night at the village of La Valla; but the landlady of the only public-house would not



have us at any price. She was a lone woman, without a protector, and cautious of harbouring strangers. Another old woman to mend the matter, told us in confidence, that in fact there were so many brigands and *mauvais sujets* about, that they were obliged to be careful who they took in ; several houses had already been robbed. So we had to plod on two leagues further.

I have merely touched upon this mountain part of France, because it is out of the way, and may be visited with advantage, especially by sportsmen, and those in search of an economical residence. I will not drag the reader through the cities of Lyons or Geneva, or those of the north of Italy, to all of which we walked. Neither will I lead him again up and down the mountains of Switzerland, in which we made a month's tour, simply mentioning, as a caution to pedestrians and others, an accident that nearly befel my friend.

It was in the valley of Hasli, below the Hospice of the Grimsel. We had started the day before from Andermatt a little above the

Devil's Bridge, at the foot of St. Gothard. The snow was only partially melted, it being the early part of June. In fact, our road lay wholly on the snow up to the Furca Pass, and down again to the Glacier du Rhône. This impetuous infant river starts roaring from its mother's lap, partly tearing through the rocks, partly arched over with snow.

Over one of these frail bridges we crossed, and bringing our right shoulders too much up, descended towards the Vallais. Finding our mistake near nightfall, we reascended the mountain, and in company with a man, whom we prevailed upon to come with us as a guide, steered across the snowy plain, the route being indicated by posts stuck upright. The smooth, snowy hill descends precipitately towards the Hospice, and sitting upon his pole, the guide telling us to follow his example, on our sticks, shot like an arrow down the steep.

We followed, and soon concluded a thirteen hours' walk at this wretched building, supping upon a mess of gristle and brine, parts, as it

turned out, of a most infantine calf salted down. I have in the course of my travels freely partaken of ancient he-goat highly seasoned with garlic, but a more objectionable dish than salted calf an hour old, I never ate.

The next morning we left the path, attracted by the roar of a neighbouring waterfall which, after some wandering amongst the pines, we found. Overhanging the torrent was a flat rock inclined at an angle to the fall, and covered with a green carpet of what looked like moss. Trusting himself fearlessly to this, my friend walked towards the edge to look down into the boiling gulf, the smooth green surface of the torrent swiftly passing before our eyes.

When about half way across the rock, the green carpet suddenly gave way, as if it had been really a loose cloth thrown over the stone; and my friend, falling on his side, slid in spite of every effort, to the very edge that hung over the fall. A foot further, and he would have gone over, to be carried down in the green torrent, and dashed to pieces on

the rocks below. The instant he fell, I had taken off my coat, and holding it by both arms, while I threw the stick as far as I could reach without committing myself to the smooth wet stone which would have been infallibly to share his fate. By the luckiest chance he caught it, and after a nervous interval which severely tried the strength of the broad cloth, he scrambled up with safety. I never more thoroughly felt the sensation of having my heart in my mouth than on that occasion.

I will not drag the reader over the familiar and often described ground of the north of Italy, rendered, though it is, more interesting by events long subsequent to my journeyings; neither will I inflict upon him descriptions of Venice, or the well-trodden path of the Tyrol, further than to note an adventure that befel us in the last-named country, which though it had in it much of the comic element, was intended, no doubt, to bear another character.

He who has travelled from Trent to Inspruck,

may possibly have noted not far from the small town of Mals, a curious fountain—so to call it—the work of some pious rural artificer, standing near a little chapel by the roadside. It is a rude construction of wood, painted to the life, representing a figure of the Saviour with the spear sticking in its side—the handle of the spear being perforated, and performing the office of a spout, from which the pure mountain stream flows copiously into a wooden trough for the benefit of man and beast.

Seated by the side of this somewhat grotesque representation of a solemn subject, was a comely woman ; her head surmounted with a grenadier's cap of blue worsted, which hung loose from it like the hair of the bear skin, forming the peculiar and certainly heavy and inconvenient head-dress of the peasantry of that part of the country.

Having slaked our thirst we entered into conversation as far as our capabilities admitted, with the fair native, and learnt from her that

a waterfall existed just at the back of the mountain—a little league off—to pass which unvisited would be a pity ; the rolling river, now swollen, by late rains, coming tumbling from the crest of the mountain, then down into the deep dark valley. It was rarely visited ; but those who had been there spoke in raptures of its magnificence. She had heard of waterfalls elsewhere—in Switzerland and other places ; but travellers, and especially the English, said they were nothing when compared to this. It was besides scarcely a league out of the way, as by taking a path over the hill we might fall upon Mals at once, without returning on our steps. “ It really is a grand thing,” said the girl, rising ; “ and I would show it you myself with pleasure, but are expected at home, and are going the other way.”

To sinews strong with a march of two thousand miles, what was the trifling addition of a league ? Besides, it might be a real lion in our path, and there was no Murray in those days to sift the wheat from the chaff, and instruct us to what really was or was not worth

visiting. We decided upon the waterfall ; and taking a somewhat blind road to the right, struck out between the mountains.

Accustomed as we were to the impromptu measurements of the peasantry : the mile and a bittock' at home, the *p'tit quart de lieue* of France, and the *no mas de media legua* of Spain, we were not likely to take our fair friend's word to the letter, in the matter of the distance. It was probably some four or five miles, but the evening was not very far advanced, and supposing it double that, we had time to do it before nightfall. But after pretty swift walking for an hour and a half, we began to pause occasionally for the expected roar of the cascade ; but our way got more silent and lonely than ever. We had not passed a single house ; but a little black cross inserted into a rock, or the head of the Virgin enclosed in a narrow frame of masonry, indicated with silent but expressive eloquence, the spot where a murder had been perpetrated, or an escape achieved ; neither particularly consolatory on a strange deserted road with every facility of

ambush, a strange country, and the coming night. Still we pushed forward along the path, now dwindled into a horse-track amongst the rocks ; and at the end of somewhat more than two hours, were rewarded with the sound of moving water at no great distance—far, however, from conveying to the mind any idea of a torrent falling from the summit of a lofty hill.

In a few minutes we reached a solitary moss-covered mill, standing on the bank of an inconsiderable mountain stream, of which it appeared to take no notice by any movement of its machinery : indeed, the great grey wheel hung on to its gable seemed crisp and thirsty, as longing to lap up the bright water which passed along the channel beside it. Somebody, nevertheless, was at home, for an ill-favoured cur gave yelping notice of our approach, bringing out a worse favoured old woman, who stoned him into silence with many guttural curses.

“There’s no waterfall here,” said the old woman, in answer to our inquiries. “There is



one I am told up beyond, eastward—you may get there by midnight. It's a blind path and I've no one to show you the way. I'm a lone woman—a miller—have you any business with me? any corn to grind?"

"None. But we must sleep here: we have walked all day, and are hungry."

"What are you?" said the old woman, retreating into the doorway, and looking spitefully at us from head to foot as if she wanted to see our pockets. "Are you Germans or Frenchmen, or what? Italians you are not, by your eyes and hair."

"We are English."

"Umph!" said the woman, though with somewhat more graciousness; "you may come in: I'll do what I can. I have a bed."

To those who have been upon their legs some twelve hours, in a mountain air, such a summons was not to be neglected—combining as it probably did a supper of hot cakes baked upon the wood ashes, which whitened the whole recess of the chimney, and crossed in the

centre by a few half burnt logs, in which the fire held a smouldering life.

Although the conversation recorded above passes quickly enough into writing, it was not achieved without much difficulty in the Italian, German and patois-German of the country, aided on our part by expletives in other and more familiar tongues.

“And so you are English,” said the old woman, when she had raked together the fire, and put down the cakes; “and stout fellows, too,” with something of a sneer. “Fourt! you devil’s kind!” said she catching up a brand, and hurling it at the dog, who had sneaked growlingly in, “stay outside, that’s your place at night.”

Although our hostess was not a favourable specimen of the gentler sex, her cakes were undeniably good, and as we took them literally hot and hot off the fire scarcely waiting till they were done through, she quietly supplied their places with more.

“I suppose you can pay for all this?” said

the old woman, in her usual harsh ungracious tone ; “ you have got some money, I suppose, travellers can’t go abroad without it ; and yet if you had, I wonder you did not take the diligence.” This was said in a sort of “ aside,” as if she was weighing in her mind the reputed wealth of the country we belonged to, and the little evidence given of it in the humble state of our travelling equipments.

Assuring this ungracious old person that we were fully capable of paying for whatever we might call for, and my friend to enforce this satisfactory truth produced a napoleon from his pocket.

“ That’s a fine coin,” said the old woman, greedily eyeing it ; “ that’s something like money ; not like our half-brass half-silver stuff. But gold does not find its way here often. I never saw ten of them together in all my life. I’d give something to see ten of them together.”

“ Then I’ll gratify you for once in your life,” said my friend taking a dozen from his pocket and laying them on the table, “ take a good look

at them if it affords you the slightest gratification."

The old hag turned them over with her skinny fingers, and gloated with a sort of rapture over the little heap of gold; and so devilish did the expression of pleasure make her appear, that we shuddered while we laughed at her.

Suddenly the dog outside gave a sharp bark, when our hostess, dropping the money she was examining, rushed briskly out of the door and clattered down the roughly paved path-walk that led to the house. We fancied during her absence that other voices were audible, but she came in after a time, alone, and to our astonishment, produced from a cupboard a bottle containing spirits, strongly flavoured with aniseed. This was so entirely unexpected that we softened considerably to the old lady, though no doubt the sight of the gold had wrought this amelioration in her manners.

We found that our hostess slept in the kitchen, in a bedstead which seemed built into the wall; though, in fact, it acquired this appearance from being flanked, both at head and foot,

by cupboards or clothes-presses, which projected as far as the bedstead into the room and reached the ceiling; and when the bed-box was closed up during the day—probably at night too—by a shutter raised by two handles from out of the framework, closing up the bed-place completely, and literally boxing the inmates.

On being shown up stairs to our sleeping apartment, we found a precisely similar bed-box, similarly flanked, smelling very close indeed, and decidedly narrow for two.

It had always been our custom throughout our tour to take the first choice of sleeping places alternately, and on this occasion my friend had the selection; so taking possession of the bed-box himself, I contented myself with a large, massive, oaken table, whereon to pass the night in my clothes, with an added blanket from the bed.

While we were making these arrangements, to our unutterable astonishment the mill began to work; and that so suddenly and with such a vibration of the premises, that it seemed as if the place had been overwhelmed with an

avalanche, and was being rent and crushed to pieces. Although this seemed a gratuitous piece of annoyance on the part of the old woman, yet we had slept through many as noisy a scene, and we resisted the first impulse to call to her and desire that the mill might be stopped, thinking it might be done by the old fiend, as a means of extorting money—hoping, perhaps, to be bribed with one of the bright napoleons for a quiet night's rest. This idea once entertained, we resolved to thwart her; and, as in similar cases of street music, rather to submit to the annoyance than uphold the imposition by any offer of hush-money.

“Those who sleep well,” says the Spanish proverb, “are never troubled with the fleas;” or, it may be added, with the noise of a water-mill; so, setting the window open and putting a temporary fastening to the door—for there was no key, and a large wooden bolt having been withdrawn, leaving only the staples—we betook ourselves to our respective couches, and were soon buried in the sleep of those who have walked for twelve consecutive hours.

“To sleep? perchance to dream; ay, there’s the rub!” A copious supper of half-baked dough upon an empty stomach, is not to be indulged in by any mortal of ordinary digestive powers with impunity. I was oppressed with some horrible anxiety, deepening in weight as the night wore on. If the single blanket had been multiplied by tens of thousands, it could not have weighed upon me with a more crushing load; and in the midst of this weight, against which I struggled in vain, an innumerable cavalry charged over me, and stumbling on the impediment, rolled upon my chest in a struggling mass of men and horses. In the desperate effort to relieve myself, I rolled off the table, and it was not till after many copious draughts of the fresh night-air at the window, that I could sufficiently collect myself to recognise where I was.

The scene was calm and beautiful, or rather it would have been so but for the clatter of the abominable mill. Not a breath of air stirred the trees or waved the grass on the mountain side, and the unclouded moon looked

full into the room, and silvered the lofty peaks of the surrounding mountains. I still felt such a constriction of the chest as might have been caused by a tightly encompassing cord, twisted, garotte fashion, by a handle behind the back ; and as there seemed little likelihood of a remission of this oppressive feeling, I lighted my German pipe, and seating myself at the window, prepared to while away the hours under the sedative and digestive influence of tobacco. We had retired to rest little more than an hour, it was one o'clock, and being in the middle of July, day would soon be breaking. I felt an uncommon desire to quit that mill ; and had it not been for some compunction in waking my friend, should have called up the old woman and departed. Judging from his broken snorts and restlessness, I imagined that he too was suffering under an invasion of night-mare, and I took to watching him with some attention, ready to wake him should the night-hag ride too heavily.

While I did so, it struck me that the door or shutter, intended to close up the bed-place,



was somewhat higher than it had been, nay, was getting higher every instant. The hand which lay on the outside of the clothes, and which I had long marked in its convulsive twitchings, and thought of poor Falstaff picking at the sheets when he “babbled o’ green fields,” was now hidden by the rising shutter. This could be no dream of mine, or movement of his, for save the nervous twitchings I had noted, evidently caused by some imaginary fight he was engaged in, he had never moved; and for myself I was certainly broad awake: no man that I had ever heard of, had been known to smoke in his sleep—not even a German somnambulist.

In truth the shutter was palpably rising higher: his shoulder was now behind it—his chin, his cheek, and finally his dark, curling hair was not to be marked upon the pillow.

This description, though brief, is long as compared with the reality. The shutter was being rapidly pushed up by some unseen agency from below, with what object there was no time to speculate. The old hag,

our hostess, was not one to be accused of any affectionate intentions in thus tucking us up in bed—for we were doubtless supposed to be both sound asleep in the box—such an eccentric idea as that one of us should have preferred the table to half a bed, never having occurred to her. A thought flashed through my mind as to what might occur when the box was closed! One has heard of beds sinking into some hideous vault, and the occupants awaking amongst a band of assassins, or an ingenious turn of the machinery consigning the victims to a well or pit far down in the bowels of the earth.

I rushed to the bed, seized the heavy sleeper, shook him, struck him, dragged him by main force from over the rising shutter. It was impossible to wake him so that any efforts of his own might be available; but his very resistance assisted in doing so, as in his struggles to free himself from my grasp, he scraped himself in no tender way against the top of the shutter, and was hauled out upon the floor in no amiable frame of mind, as

the shutter closed firmly against the tester of the bed-box.

It was some time before my companion could be made to comprehend what had befallen him, or, indeed, where he was at all. When he was fairly shaken into consciousness and dressed, we held a council of war as to what was best to be done. Under the circumstances, we thought it advisable to make no disturbance, but wait till daylight; leaving our hosts, whoever they were, in the belief that their object, whatever it might be, had been effected. In the meantime the mill seemed to make a greater clatter than ever, and there was a thicker atmosphere of flour in the room. In spite of our good resolutions to the contrary, we both fell asleep, and did not awake till it was broad daylight, and then we were roused, as it seemed, by some one trying to force open the door. The mill had stopped—when we could not tell.

We were too anxious to get away from this ill-omened house to spend any unnecessary

time at the toilet; neither did we think it advisable to wait for breakfast, but we were determined to see if anything had taken place within the bed-box. Pulling down the shutter a few inches, with some difficulty, as it was jammed with something heavy inside, a quantity of flour rolled out into our faces and over our clothes; the whole box was filled with flour up to the roof of the bed!

The truth was but too apparent. In the heaviness of our first sleep, it had been intended to enclose us safely in the bed, and then to smother us with flour, a dozen sacks of which had probably been poured in through some aperture in the roof—while the clamour of the mill was amply sufficient to drown the noise of the operators, or our cries, if, indeed, we could make any.

Under the circumstances of such an atrocious attempt, it was not at all likely that we should be allowed to leave the mill, or at any rate the valley, without some further measures for making us safe, as well as securing the glitter-

ing prize contained in my friend's waistcoat pocket, so it behoved us to evacuate the premises with care.

Looking to our pistols, which, though small, would do good service at close quarters, we descended quickly into the kitchen. There was no one there—not even the dog. The fire was burning surrounded by a vast heap of ashes, as if it had been kept in all night. The old woman's bed-box was closed up, and we had no particular curiosity to open it, though heartily wishing her as good a flouring as she had intended for us. The door was partly open, and we issued out into the free bracing air without seeing a person or hearing the movement of any one.

We determined, nevertheless, to retire from the position in military style, in case any attempt should be made to harrass our rear from the upper windows; so while one, pistol in hand, stood fronting the house at a few yards from it, the other moved down the path some fifty yards, and kept watch on the

house while the other retired, and so on alternately till we were out of shot.

As Tyrolese marksmen are not famous for snap shots, we could easily have dodged behind the bushes on the appearance of the enemy at the window. But after all there were plenty of favourable spots for the miller and his men to have shot us—themselves unseen—before we could reach the high road, between which and the mill there was not, as far as we remembered, any house whatever. But we had not served in the Bocages for nothing. We kept at some distance apart, looked sharply to the right and left, and occasionally threw out a flanker to turn any very suspicious place.

Suddenly the yelp of a dog was heard at some distance ahead—a yelp, too, that we had heard before, both on approaching the mill, and when the old woman so hastily dropped the gold to rush out and reconnoitre. Here then they were. It was a small thicket on either side the path, which more resembled the bed of a watercourse, now dry; but encumbered with shingle, and fragments of rock of all sizes.

On one side of this pass, the flat ground extended to some distance; on the other, the mountain rose abruptly to probably a thousand feet, and was backed by others still loftier. Up the face of this hill we determined upon ascending, and to go parallel to the path, at an elevation out of rifle-shot. There were probably three or four men concerned in the affair, and it would have been scarcely advisable to force the pass with walking-sticks and pocket-pistols against even a couple of riflemen.

After a rough scramble up the hill, the face of which was covered with loose shale or slate, we hurried along the side, and coming over the clump of bushes, could see several men lying amongst the bushes: three tall hats were plainly visible, and another suspected. Though within fair rifle-shot, no molestation was attempted, and we arrived at Mals to a very late breakfast.

Our first impulse was to rush to a magistrate and state the whole circumstances, but were deterred by the wary counsel of the innkeeper, a Frenchman, once a *voltigeur* in the Imperial

army, now a thriving Boniface at Mals, with a Tyrolese wife, of grenadier proportions, and head-dress to match.

“ If you wish to stay in Mals,” said our honest friend, “ and to be under the surveillance of the police, and not allowed to leave the town and go through endless examinations, cross-examinations, re-examinations — all committed to paper, and to be compared and read over with endless forms and ceremonies; and then the cause removed to Inspruck for perhaps another month, well and good. And what can you prove? They meant to stifle you, no doubt, that any man of common sense can see; but the lawyers will prove that they did not stifle you, consequently no murder was committed. They pushed up the bed shutter, because they thought that having drunk copiously of aniseed brandy, you might fall out of bed and hurt yourselves; and then, a little flower fell through the floor above, shaken down by the action of the mill. *Voilà tout!* They swear this, you swear the other story; which think



you the judge will find it convenient to believe? You won't strengthen your cause by any payment to the police and others. Of course not! you have truth, and all that, on your side—they have a little money, not much, I suppose, unless they have many visitors hunting for waterfalls; but whatever it may be, it is better than nothing and will prevail. Nay, the chances are they may turn round upon you, and accuse you of breaking open the house, and you—foreigners—may lie in prison for years! You left money for your entertainment, but how prove it? No, Messieurs, my advice is make up for a bad dinner by a good one to-day. *Une soupe à la Julienne aux points d'asperge, filets de truits à la Mazarine, et puis un fricandeau, et un rôti de chevreuil, avec du bon vin d'Italie*—this will restore you after all, and to-morrow—*bon voyage!* but I would write from Switzerland and denounce the place, so that the police may have an eye upon them should a traveller be missed."

We took our friend's advice, and plodded on to Constance, then striking the Rhine we

kept as near to it as possible all down to Basle. From Basle we ran down the Rhine to Strasburg—moved towards that ancient city by a wish to see its far-famed tower, and not altogether without the more ignoble motive of tasting its famous pies. My sole motive for mentioning this portion of the tour has reference to these pies : I wish to damage as much as in me lies, the interest of the sordid miscreants who make them, and to turn, if I can, the stomachs of those by whom they are eaten. Has the curious gastronome, who indulges in the expensive delicacy of a *pâté de foie gras*—a fat liver pie—ever seen the geese from whom the livers which compose it are taken ? ever seen the livers themselves before they are consigned to the pie ? I know it would be in vain to urge the cruelty practised upon the goose. In the “*Almanach des Gourmands*,” quoted by Dr. Kitchener, it is said that the geese are nailed by the feet to boards, or shelves, side by side ; and placed in front of a fire, constantly kept up, while they are crammed with nourishing food till their livers become enlarged by the unnatural

heat, and attain a diseased development—in which state of congestion they are consigned to the pie. I cannot say that my own experience verified the fact of the geese being so partially roasted alive, but their cramming and disease I was a witness to.

Arriving at Strasburg in the forenoon, we ‘descended,’ as the phrase is—rather ascended—into that respectable hotel, the ‘Rothes Haus,’ and, with appetites sharpened by a four league walk, sat down magnanimously to a *pâté de foie gras*.

It is a little rich, and independent of any considerations of the disease of the organs, a trifle surfeiting.

“Garçon, de l’eau de vie !”

“P’tit verre, Monsieur ?”

“Non, grand verre—deux.”

“Ah, ha! c’est bien—bien,” he repeated as he nodded his head approvingly.

He liked the kind of fellows who began the day well; though doubtless thinking the exquisite *pâté* somewhat thrown away upon people who fed upon raw beef, washed down by heavy ale.

We had a desire to see the geese who so kindly furnished this exquisite rarity, for which Strasburg was so justly renowned, and which even found its way, though at a rather prohibitive price, into England.

Monsieur le Commissionaire presented himself; a quiet, hatchet-faced little man, who knew some highly respectable liver-growers, to whom he would be proud to introduce us; in fact, he was entirely at our service to shew us the town and the curiosities thereof to any extent we pleased.

Moving across the square, amongst the clattering sabots, which made one shrink nervously as they recklessly fell round one's feet, we passed down a narrow and rather quiet street, wholly German both in character and smell; and stopping before a large door, the Commissionaire gave a tap or two with a very small rapper of rude iron-work. This was answered by a screaming inquiry from the interior, as if of one too lazy or comfortable to answer the door without due cause shown, but upon a return scream being wafted through the keyhole, a heavy

woman presented herself, and invited us in with some civility. We were asked into the *cave*, a place in almost total darkness, and there, upon thin long planks, to which they were nailed by the feet, were three ranks of geese, as close as they could sit to each other, and without any power of moving, except such as was afforded by the alternative of sitting or standing; and so close were they that the movement of any one caused a thrill of pain to pass through the inflamed feet of all in the rank, much increased by the attempt to relieve themselves from such a position. But the greatest flutter was when they were crammed, an operation wholly against their will, and no doubt sufficiently disgusting.

A little of this satisfied us, but we wanted to see a liver fresh from the creature, and preferred our request accordingly, without success, however, as none of the subjects were sufficiently advanced. Another lady was mentioned as very likely to kill at that particular crisis, and thither we went. In a narrower street, although more filthy, and with a sourer gutter, we were received into a gaunt, melancholy mansion, by

one of those hard lumps of servant-maids, for which Germany and Ireland are famous ; and, as it happened, came just in time to witness the slaughter of ten geese, and their subsequent embowelment. I scarcely remember a more disgusting scene than this. A rough fellow, who swore at every sentence, armed with a large clasp-knife, cut out the goose's foot from the nail which was left to be drawn out subsequently ; and then with a dexterous twist of the hands, which long practice only could have given, broke the bird's neck, and tossed him down to kick out his life upon the table while he proceeded to fetch another victim.

Some of these livers must have weighed at least three pounds, and were nearly as big as a child's head. They were most of them pretty healthy, a pustule here and there, certainly, but one was in a state of extensive disease.

Now, does your ladyship, from the experience of foreign manners which you have gathered in a trip to Baden-Baden imagine that these diseased livers were thrown away, that even the

pustules were cut out? The Commissionaire said they were, and the goose-killer confirmed it with an oath, so unnecessarily filthy and blasphemous, that I was convinced he was uttering a falsehood. Do you suppose that any persons capable of so fattening their geese, would be restrained by any remarkable squeamishness as to the state of the livers they had been at the expense of so fostering?

I declare most solemnly, that if the humble writer of this page had had the singular felicity of marrying your ladyship—you being in your prime spring, and he in his most ardent summer—if your ladyship had eaten of Strasbourg pie at the wedding-breakfast, there is no human power, short of irresistible personal violence, which should have compelled him to enter the carriage with you till you had taken an emetic. Pulv. Ipecac: or any other formula of curtailed latinity you pleased; but a sound and sufficient emetic.

After all, there is some meaning in vows and promises. Your ladyship having punctually attended Divine service ever since you

were capable of being trusted in public, must have conceived some respect for the “sacred edifice;” and having deliberately uttered a solemn vow of obedience administered by a reverend gentleman, invested with the fullest episcopal paraphernalia, and assisted by another, in case he should break down; looking also, as you did, upon the most sacred emblems of the christian faith—your ladyship, I say, under such circumstances, could hardly have ventured to refuse the prescription.

If, however, your ladyship, or our good friends the gastronomers, have no objection to a trifle of purulence or ulceration in your food—why, then, I leave you to your pus-pie with what appetite you may.

In Burgundy I was seized with fever, and conveyed, in a pitiable state of helplessness, to Paris. There, after a month’s sojourn on my part, in bed, an event occurred, which shows how little the mind, or the perceptive faculties are to be relied upon in illness.

The hotel we stopped at was far from being of a high class, though sufficiently comfortable.



It was crowded with inmates, many of whom lived permanently in the house. The visitors to these, as they ran singing and talking upstairs, would sometimes knock at my door, and not unfrequently, put their heads in, to inquire for lodgers above ; and, as these interruptions occurred principally at night—sometimes after the theatres were over—and were by no means agreeable in my weak state, my friend, who slept next door, and could be summoned by knocking at the wall, was accustomed to lock my door when he went to bed, and take the key with him.

One night, as I lay broad awake, according to my own opinion, for I had been reading, and had just put down the book—which was a French translation of one of Sir Walter Scott's early novels—when the bedroom door opened, and an elderly man, dressed in a complete suit of brown, entered the apartment. It was a costume—such as I never saw any person in, before or since—of a sort of snuff-colour, and of the same cloth throughout. He was a mild, serious man, of reverend manners and few

words. He came into the room with a slight bow, drew a chair to the bedside, and addressed me in English. Without circumlocation or apology, or any of the forms usually observed between strangers, he began by telling me I must leave Paris immediately, if I wished to reach England alive. This he impressed upon me again and again; and to my remonstrances that I really was not strong enough to undertake so fatiguing a journey, he said: "Only try, for go you must, or you will speedily be buried in Paris. And lose no time about it," he continued, "but get up at once, and pack your clothes and take the diligence in the morning;" and then, with another quiet salutation, he rose and left the room.

I immediately got up and dressed myself, though I had not been out of bed for a month, packed my clothes, not very tidily, into my port-manteau, and then lay down, full-dressed, upon the bed, exhausted with the unusual fatigue.

At the usual hour in the morning, my companion unlocked the door, and came in to see me; and it may be readily imagined that

his astonishment was excessive when he found me dressed and my portmanteau packed. But it was still further increased when I told him of the visitor by whose earnest recommendation I had acted—the door being unquestionably locked all night, the key in his possession, his own door locked, and he having that moment unlocked mine also. There could have been no collusion or mistake: it was evidently a sort of waking dream, but so impressive that I persisted in acting upon it. Places were taken in the diligence for the morning after, and I started, to all appearance, more dead than alive. An English family of four, who occupied the other seats; remonstrated, in my hearing, with the conductor, upon taking a passenger who bid fair to die on the road. So far from this taking place, I revived with every mile we got on; and when we reached Amiens, was so ravenously hungry—having had no appetite before during the whole illness—that I took my seat at the supper-table and ate till I was ashamed of eating. From the fifth hour after I left Paris, I felt myself virtually well.

## CHAPTER IV.

## TO IRELAND.

THE regiment I had exchanged into was quartered in the north of Ireland, and thither I betook myself with all convenient speed. It was in this corps, my friend, that we first met; and to it I am indebted for some of the most valuable and lasting friendships of my life. That delightful old corps had in most things a way of their own: they lived upon their traditions, and hugged their curious old customs with fond tenacity; nor did those who joined them fail of taking up the old habits, and hugging them as fondly as the original mem-

bers of the corps. True, they were regarded with some surprise at first, and their dress and behaviour curiously noticed. Never did I know a regiment feed more kindly upon pipe-clay, or thrive so well upon that generally dry food. They even took it at their meals. To see them sit down to dinner you would suppose they were holding a court-martial upon the beef and mutton, and trying the side-dishes for their lives. The first day or two I instinctively rose when the president took the chair, expecting the usual formula before he sat down: "You shall well and truly try and determine, according to the evidence in the matter now before you."

Every man sat down to dinner in his white belt and sword by his side, his coat buttoned to the top and the bottom button; nor would they admit of any relaxation in this particular, even in the dog-days. Talk of the terror of invasion!—why the sight of such a mess at Dover Castle, ready to draw swords, or corks, at the shortest notice, and prepared to go any

length in either service, would have struck a damp into a hostile armament, even across the Channel.

I don't know how it was, but men clung to that regiment, and you could not get them to move either in or out of it. I remember an ensign, who, after nine years' service in that preparatory rank, gave a handsome sum beyond the regulation for the honour of being junior lieutenant. It was, in truth, an admission into a court of elders. You remember old, old Peter Penn, the senior subaltern, of whose hair no man living had known the early colour, and to discover the date of whose ensigncy (Hart not then being in existence) you had to search into by-gone records, not always accessible to the military student; and to hunt after his doings in the old time before that, when he was a volunteer, was like going back into the middle ages. It was pleasantly reported of him that the battle of Minden had been amongst his services, and some even went on to say that it was for his sake the heroine,

celebrated in song, had taken an exalted station, from whence to witness the deeds of her beloved.

“ Now stood Eliza on the wood-crowned height,  
O'er Minden's plain, spectatress of the fight.”

But this our friend consistently denied. You remember our visiting him on detachment—and he was always on detachment, they seemed contrived for his especial advantage—how, being detained by many snipes upon the way, we reached the mud hovel assigned to him just as his dinner was over, found him sworded and belted, and concentrating the very essence of the corps in his own time-honoured person. How, as we lifted the latch and walked in, we found him with a bumper of the true black-strap in hand, giving, in a sonorous voice, the usual: “ Mr. Vice, the custom of the mess !”

How many captains and field-officers had passed over his head, I am scarcely in a condition to say with any pretension to accuracy ; but I am inclined to think all, or very nearly so. Indeed, they made him a stepping-stone

so long, that it was a wonder he had any hair remaining at all. And how easily he consoled himself with that philosophical reflection—which you and I are now come to draw upon—that it will be all the same a hundred years hence ! You remember how we used to shock the good old fellow with our jokes, when any new promotion took place, and call it another Feast of the Pass-over ! But you will be surprised to find that he is even now alive and flourishing upon the half-pay company, which they at last gave him as a bribe to go, doubtless hundreds of years old ; and has got his war-medal—paying for the same. I tried to induce him to come up to the Great Exhibition, to show himself as a specimen of an ancient foot-soldier—of course with his medals on his breast, and taking care to pin to the ribbon they hang by, the receipt for the money they charged him for them.

I wish I had the writing of the records of that old corps, with full access to the old order-books, if happily they still exist. In one, sometime about the period of the early Georges, I



remember a curious entry : "The commanding officer requests that in future no officer will inspect his company, or any body of men under arms, in his dressing-gown. The colonel has a captain-lieutenant in his eye, who is frequently guilty of this irregular practice." What was the exact date of this looseness of discipline, where it occurred, or how long the captain-lieutenant remained in the colonel's eye, I regret that I did not preserve by some memorandum.

In Dublin, we had our fill of pipe-clay, under that renowned old soldier, Sir David B.; and how frequently did we repeat, and testify to the truth of, those emphatic words attributed to his respected mother, who, when told that her son was taken at the siege of Seringapatam, and that the prisoners were chained two and two together, exclaimed : "The Lord help the man that's chained to my Davie !"

He clung with remarkable tenacity to the old military costume of breeches and gaiters, in which all garrison duties at that time were performed in Dublin : a dress admirably calculated to keep people awake even on a guard-

bed—for a man must have been an inveterate sleeper, who could fall into any repose with twenty-six button-shanks (four for each breeches leg, and twenty-two for each gaiter) forced into the leg by the hard boards of the guard-bed. But the great lever by which he thought of raising the British army to eminence, was the “goose-step.”

The non-professional reader may perhaps require some enlightenment on this favourite study of the old martinets. The goose-step derives its name from the necessity which the student who performs it has of standing on one leg. Imagine him standing on the right leg, the other being raised so that the foot just clears the ground. Upon the word “Front” from the instructor of the drill, he advances the raised foot to the front to an extent rather short of a pace, and there keeps it suspended till he hears the word “Forward.” He then places the suspended foot on the ground, and raises the other, keeping it off the ground in the rear, till at the further word “Tow,” he brings it up to the standing

foot, though still keeping it off the ground. He is then in the position from which he started; and at the successive words, "Front," "Forward," "Tow," each leg goes through the alternate standing and suspension required: and so on for as many hours as the drill is ordered to last.

Sir David was determined to have a perfect garrison; and as that object could only be obtained, in his opinion, by the facility of standing on one leg, he sent every officer below the rank of a regimental major, and, of course, every non-commissioned officer and man, to the goose-step. Then might have been seen a spectacle worthy of a martinet. Old captains with the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel and major, old subalterns with the stomachs incidental to advancing years—the bald, the grey, the fat, the slender—all front, forward, towing it in the Phoenix Park. It was in vain to plead gout or rheumatism, nobody below the rank of regimental major was presumed to have either. There was a Scotch regiment in the garrison, and I re-

member an old subaltern always contriving by some extraordinary shift to keep one particular leg off the ground. The sharp eye of the general was, however, not to be blinded :

“ How is it, Sir, that you don’t change your feet ?”

“ The reet fut, general,” said the other, “ as lang as ye like ; but the deil ha’ me, if ye get the gooty ane doon.”

It would have been in vain to tell him how all our great actions had been fought with little or no assistance from the goose-step ; how a line could advance and conquer at quick instead of ordinary time, or even in a rush, and with infinitely less loss. All such arguments he was proof against : like the old priest he had adopted his “ mumpsimus,” and was not likely to change it at his time of life for the right reading.

That the goose-step is not a lively recreation, or such as a man would take up with any zeal in private life, may be inferred from this description. It is, however, applicable, in a figurative sense, to the act of retiring from Her Majesty’s service.

The officer who succeeded him, Sir C. G., was remarkably different; a cavalry soldier of distinction, and all for "progress" in the service. With a splendid figure, superbly dressed, and with a sort of finical delivery of his words, he was the affected Murat of the army. He never condescended to speak to any one below a commanding officer, upon whose head he visited all delinquencies in his corps. I must somewhat modify this assertion; for when he met a captain or subaltern in plain clothes, however anxious they might be to keep out of the way, and avoid recognition, he invariably saluted them, and decanted his wrath upon the officer in command.

Under his rule, one of those rare instances occurred of an officer being reported unfit for promotion in consequence of incapacity. As his friends refused to take him out of the service, and as he had attained the rank of captain without any question, their demur seemed not altogether unfounded. The only course, therefore, was to try his abilities in reference to moving a battalion; and, of course,

a very strong muster of the garrison took place to see the trial. The regiment being in open column, a line was required to be formed upon the right centre company; no very complicated manœuvre, but wholly beyond the science of poor M. He tried, "Right face." "It won't do, Sir." "Left face." "No, Sir, no." "Right about face." "Worse and worse." At last he hit upon a royal road. "Form line upon the right centre company; quick march!"

"Thank you, Captain M.; thank you," said the general; "you have enlightened me very much. And now, Colonel B., perhaps you will indulge me with a major?"

"Which of them will you have, Sir," asked the colonel, with great liberality.

"Which you please, Colonel B. Stay, I'll begin with the old one."

Sir C.'s manner of speaking to officers—sometimes before the men—was more amusing than proper, and certainly not calculated to keep up the authority which an officer ought, under any circumstances, to be possessed of.

On one occasion, an extremely fat colonel of Heavies had offended him in the field. "Go," said he to the aide-de-camp, "and desire that heavy man to come to me. Upon my word, Sir," said Sir C., addressing him, "your incapacity is so great, that I have a curiosity to know how you contrive to get your regiment out of the barracks."

"I'll tell you how I do that, general," said the fat man, with a confidential air, and a degree of humour which would have done no discredit to Sir John Falstaff, "I ride out first, and they all follow me."

To the splendour of this gentleman succeeded one altogether insignificant in appearance, Sir C. D., a man of so much anxiety that he fairly fretted the flesh off his bones, leaving little but a skeleton under a vast cocked hat. Night and day, men said, he was devising plans of attack and defence, even getting up to drill the furniture, and lead his column of chairs, to force a passage between the sofa and the chiffonier; deploying his nest of tables, or thrusting forward on its casters a light moving

settee as a charge of cavalry. These movements sadly disturbed the household, especially when he found himself forced to conduct a scientific retreat from the first to the ground floor, or rallying, drove the enemy pell-mell up to the bed-rooms, finishing with a hearty cheer and a wave of his cocked hat.

It was not to be supposed that such doings would pass unnoticed by the caricaturists of the garrison. One, I remember, represented a scene on the sands below the pigeon-house fort, where the general had taken his little army, and formed them, unmindful of the coming tide. In order to explain the movement, he had assembled the field-officers and adjutants, and being with his back to the water, saw nothing of the state of an unfortunate regiment, which, being formed *en potence*, had their flank completely overwhelmed by an enemy that Canute of old was fain to succumb to. The general, like the tide,

“Too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,

And thought of convincing while they thought of  
dining.”



Among the annoying incidents of a garrison life I may mention the vicissitudes of rank. There were two majors in a certain regiment, one of whom, Major Blackdog, was the senior major, and in prolonged absence of the lieutenant-colonel from ill-health, had something like the permanent command of the regiment. The other, Major Bluemonk, was the senior captain holding the brevet rank of major, which was of prior date to the commission of Major Blackdog. Of course, in all regimental matters, Major Blackdog was paramount, and could order about Major Bluemonk as much as he thought proper; but his authority was confined wholly to the regiment, for in all garrison duties the Brevet-major Bluemonk was his senior officer; and in the event of troops being brigaded, the brevet-major, if no senior officer was present, took command of the whole.

Between Blackdog and Bluemonk there was a mortal jealousy, consequent upon their continual relative change of position. At a regimental parade might be heard the frequent

exclamation : “ Oh, Major Bluemonk ! Really, Major Bluemonk ! I’m surprised at you, Major Bluemonk ! If an undrilled ensign had brought a company into line in that way, there might have been some excuse !” and the like.

Then Bluemonk’s rooms were always wrong : the beds were ill-folded, the tables and forms unwashed, the floors filthy, the windows not properly open for ventilation ; and if these faults in the internal economy were not quite so glaring as could be wished, Blackdog would mount upon a bedstead, and draw his white glove along the top of a shelf, or poke his finger into some corner, to show how extremely filthy the room was generally. At any regimental court-martial out of the garrison he also had Bluemonk on the hip. Bluemonk was obliged to dance attendance upon him with the proceedings for approval. Exception was, if possible, taken to the finding and sentence of the court, and the unfortunate Bluemonk sent back to get a revision ; or the proceedings were written in so illegible a hand, that all were

required to be re-written, and before evening parade.

The distressed Bluemonk rushes to his quarters, and proceeds to his work with diligence. He has probably five or six sheets of close foolscap writing to copy, without the alteration of a word ; and during this operation the adjutant calls upon him from thirty to forty times to express the commanding officer's extreme impatience to have the proceedings in time. From hurry and anxiety of mind, the revised proceedings are probably much more illegible than the original ones, and accordingly there are many disparaging epithets thrown out regarding the clerk who had copied them out, and an earnest wish that he would attend the regimental school to acquire a better system of calligraphy.

Then Bluemonk's books were never right : his ledger was dirty, his defaulter-book slovenly, his day-book in a mess ; and perhaps he gave a farthing a pound more for his coffee than was paid in other companies ; or, on the contrary, he got it cheaper, and therefore of

course nastier than others. Of course I need not say that Bluemonk's company on parade were in the worst of order. His packs were badly put on, his pouches never square, and they were either so infamously polished that they looked as if done by a stable-broom rather than a shoe-brush ; or the polish was so exceedingly brilliant that Blackdog felt quite sure some fatal acid was contained in the polishing mixture which would destroy them in a month. As a matter of course an order came out that Brevet-major Bluemonk's company would parade twice a day ; the first parade being at five in the morning, with its officers, for a month, or till such time as the commanding officer saw a marked improvement in its appearance.

But suddenly the tables are turned. Major Bluemonk finds himself senior officer at a brigade field-day, and enabled to return some of the compliments he himself received on other occasions. Then we hear : " Oh, Major Blackdog ! Really, Major Blackdog ! I could not have supposed it, possible, Major Blackdog !

If a young undrilled ensign had handled a battalion in that way, one might not have wondered. Your regiment's a mob, Major Blackdog: irretrievably clubbed, I suspect. Do put them right if you can, Major Blackdog. I'm waiting for you, Sir: we can't stay here all day to set blunders to rights. The men can do well enough, I know, when they are properly handled. Dear me! have you not got them right yet?" and so forth.

But Bluemonk's triumph is but short. On the march home from the field, the other regiments branch off to their respective barracks, and leave the regiment to which the rival major belong. Blackdog had watched his time to a moment.

"I must trouble you to dismount, Major Bluemonk, and lead that company of yours properly, if possible. Anything more irregular or unsoldierlike than the way in which they move, *I* never saw."

At a garrison court-martial Bluemonk, as president, is himself again.

"I'll trouble you, Major Blackdog, before

you address any question to the witness, to submit it in writing to the Court through me. The loose habit of asking irrelevant questions takes up the time of the Court very unnecessarily, and tends to perplex not only the witness, but the members of the Court.”

But if these contentions raged so fiercely between the majors, it may be easily imagined how fierce it was between the majors' wives. The both, of course, wrote themselves Mrs. Major Blackdog and Mrs. Major Bluemonk respectively—a curious assumption of the marital rank which obtains, as far as I am aware of, in no other profession. An excellent plan of labelling a lady who, from appearance or manners, might pass for something quite different, and worthy of extension to Mrs. Merchant Smith, Mrs. Banker Jones, Mrs. Member of Parliament Snooks, or Mrs. Court Accoucheur Pocock. In fact, this might be extended indefinitely.

It is supposed that from the rivalry of these ladies, the modern phrase of “tea-fights” originated. They were never so ill-advised as to

come to direct issue of sending out their cards for the same evening, this would have extinguished the unsuccessful candidate, and of course afford a proportionate triumph to the other; the company being almost limited to the select circle of the regiment. For many days before these great events, the suavity of Blackdog, and the affability of Bluemonk were conspicuous. Men were hunted into corners, insidious questions were put as to engagements, and all the machinery of crimping employed to secure the vagrant bachelors. Now Mrs. Blackdog had the sweetest girl coming; then Mrs. Bluemonk the most elegant young lady, or perhaps an heiress, not strikingly pretty, but so amiable!

But to return to more personal matters. As I ascended towards the top of my rank, I began to feel less and less the advantages attending the commercial system of purchase in the British army. It is a system which a high authority has declared to produce the happy result of supplying the army with gentlemen, and it certainly is beneficial, inasmuch as it raises

men of property to early rank, and renders them to a great extent independent of patronage. Whether men of fortune are better soldiers than others, it would be invidious to inquire. The fact of all our great generals being men of property, I am afraid can scarcely be taken as a proof, seeing that without the means of purchasing, even the longevity of Parr or Jenkins could hardly have sufficed to raise them to that rank. If any ever did exist, they retired in disgust, and became village Wellingtons in Wales or Normandy. And while he still held out, his position as a poor man was by no means an enviable one. To live with others and not be of them, to slink from pleasures which you would fain enjoy, to prefer toast-and-water with the popping of champagne round you, and finally to be passed over and commanded—not to say bullied—by those you have commanded yourself, and who probably are indebted to you for any real knowledge of the profession which they may happen to profess, is a state of things which, however beneficial to the service



generally, is anything but pleasant to the poorer members of it—unless, indeed, they have an inordinate appetite for humble pie.

But I really believe that the man who can purchase his promotion and pay nothing more than a regulated price for it, is in a less enviable position than he who cannot purchase it at all. This man is hated—the other is compassionately contemned. He stops the promotion; nobody can get on. It is not to be supposed that people will, if they can help it, sell cheap what they have bought dear. This, though soon made apparent after a man has entered the service, is quite unsuspected by his friends and himself before; they weakly suppose that if he has the regulation prices of his commissions forthcoming, he is provided for. An old Scotch lieutenant-colonel in a regiment I once belonged to had a habit of asking every ensign to breakfast with him the day after he joined, partly with a view, it was supposed, of testing his capability to get on and keep the promotion going. One morning, while he was playing the amiable host, the young

stranger let out the fact that he could lodge the regulation, and no more. The colonel regarded him for a moment with dismal compassion, and then said: "Putt in yer cup y' unfortunate beggar, ye don't know what ye've got to go through."

There is a fluctuating market in every regiment, depending on the station, the character of the corps, and other circumstances. And it is impossible to stop it: you might as well attempt to regulate the percentage upon bills in a time of panic, or stop bribery in a borough. Formerly, commanding officers were required to make a solemn declaration at every promotion by purchase that no sum beyond the regulation was given, and it was just then that the greatest amount of money changed hands on such an account. How the lieutenant-colonel managed to get over this, when he sold out himself, it would be curious to inquire. Probably, to prevent the possibility of becoming acquainted with any tribute paid to him either in a public or private character, which might to the spiteful look like bribery, and, in con-

sequence, infringement of his word, he might have written in this wise to his agents :

“ Gentlemen,

“ Although I think it unlikely that any officers of the regiment which I now command, or any other person, should remit any sum or sums of money to be placed by you to my account, as a mark of respect and affection on my purposed retirement from the service or otherwise ; yet, should such an event occur, I will not give you the trouble to notify the same to me, as I shall soon be in town.

“ I remain, gentlemen,

“ Your’s obediently.”

Should, however, the colonel be too late in this, and the officer’s agent write him word that Messrs. Slick & Co., Solicitors of Grab Square, Lincoln’s Inn, have lodged, say £1200 to his private account ; another who happens to be related to his captain first for purchase, say £1000 ; a merchant in the city, bearing the same name as his purchasing lieutenant, £400 ;

and a clergyman in the country from whom his senior ensign is always receiving remittances, £200 more, his astonishment must be extreme. A man of business, perhaps, might in honest simplicity write to enquire how all these strange parties came to be struck with simultaneous benevolence so curiously concentrated upon his private account. The colonel is, however, a man of the world; for some good reason his kind friends have thought it necessary to do him the great good by stealth; and as they have been quiet, so must he; for his knowledge of mankind tells him, that the most delicate flattery which one man can offer to another is to follow his example, so he sells out for the regulation, and by mere accident pockets £3000 or £4000 besides. But this is no scale by which to estimate the sums which a young military aspirant pays for his promotion. I have heard of £20,000 being expended by a lieutenant-colonel of cavalry in securing that step.

It is curious to imagine what rank the great generals of the world, not blessed with afflu-

ence, would have attained in the British service. Hannibal would have been an ensign at the time he fought the battle of Cannæ; and Napoleon would probably have held the same respectable rank when he conquered Italy, and destroyed three of the best disciplined armies in Europe, commanded by men perfect in the theory of their profession, their troops set-up with admirable precision, and their lines mathematically straight. The one would have died a brevet-major, the other a captain, unless he had had very singular opportunities of distinguishing himself. Cæsar would have been at the goose-step long after the age at which he commanded a fleet, and probably, like Napoleon, would have occupied the 'withering position of an old captain.' His talent of hearing, writing, reading, and dictating from four to seven letters at a time, would have been duly appreciated in the orderly room; for most likely they would all have been adjutants.

Our noble commander-in-chief,\* under

\* While these sheets are being revised for the press, England has lost her worthiest son.

similar circumstances, would have landed in Mondego Bay, a lieutenant under Sir Harry or Sir David. Being a man of a calm, resolute temperament, he would probably have fretted less than many others at the system pursued; and we may imagine the snubbing he would have got for any suggestion of hastening the pace of his operations. The little army would probably have entrenched itself to practice the goose-step for a month or so; would have then been led out in the most approved manner, straightly and slowly on: a bloody battle would have been fought—the British troops victorious of course, always supposing they had not caught a fever at the goose-step, and mostly died off. Sir Harry or Sir David, after the action, would have called a council of war. The expedition having been completely successful, and the enemy nowhere, it would have been folly to remain; so the troops would have re-embarked covered with glory; the park and tower guns fired; thanks from the House to the gallant army; and Sir Harry or Sir David, the great

military authority of the age, pooh poohing Napoleon as an impostor; and perhaps entrusted with one or more other little expeditions before the termination of their career.

## CHAPTER V.

## TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.

FROM Ireland our regiment proceeded to Gibraltar, the very hot-bed of pipe-clay, and only tolerable from the fine climate, and the occasional trips into Spain. The Governor was a gentleman well stricken in years, in fact physically incompetent to the duties of his situation, but a fine, liberal, sensible old man, hospitable besides, and of a quaint, sly humour, gravely disguised. His taking the air involved a serious procession. Seated in a close coach, drawn by four fat horses, preceded by outriders and having two livery servants behind, he wound his slow way from end to end of the



rock. Sometimes, when the General was disposed for sport, a gun was packed in the sword-case. At a fitting place, either on Europa Flats, or within the Spanish territory, when an occasional small bird might be expected, the coach was stopped, the General with difficulty dismounted, and taking the gun, proceeded somewhat ahead, supported on either side by his men-servants. He rarely made more than one shot; but if that were successful, and a tomtit or chaffinch fell and was duly bagged, his Excellency returned in triumph, and boasted, with much humour, of his prowess.

Many thought it ridiculous for a man to go out in a coach and four, with outriders, to shoot a tomtit; but let no one measure another's amusements by his own standard, least of all the writer of this book, who can safely take upon himself to say he has been guilty of absurdities in the way of sport, sufficient to set up any moderate lunatic; and which might possibly have consigned him to Hanwell or some worse place, with his unfortunate aunt,

if it had been his misfortune to be worth shutting up.

Were it not for the perpetual iteration of garrison duties, Gibraltar would be an agreeable station. The facility for boating is great, and the snipe shooter has a marsh within half an hour's ride. Across the water, at Tetuan or Tangiers, the country swarms with red-legged partridges, which require only dogs—good, strong, Sussex spaniels—to drive them out of the bushes, and where a boar is frequently stumbled upon. Somewhat cautious must he be, for the Moors, even the tamest of them, have an under-current of fierceness in their natures, which is apt to show itself on very slight provocation. The Governor kindly provides every shooting-party with one soldier as a guard, to whom it is distinctly explained, that any harm done to any of those under his charge will be visited in the same degree upon himself, even to the extent of a cut throat. With this arrangement staring him in the face, the soldier is almost inconveniently careful of your safety.

There is probably more religious bigotry in Tetuan at this moment than in any corner of the Turkish dominions. The dismounting of a Christian from his horse or donkey, and pulling off his shoes as he passes a mosque, has been conceded ; but the Jewish consul, who accompanies him in his ride, is forced to go through those ceremonies, although the accredited representative of half-a-dozen Christian powers ; and when you go to bed upon the top of the houses, as is the very agreeable custom, it is advisable not to look too hard at any of the shapeless bundles of clothes you may see looming through the dusk on the housetops, lest you move an angry Moor to take a shot at you out of jealousy. The tribes about Ape's Hill, opposite Gibraltar, are probably more fierce and untameable than any in Barbary, and almost as little known as the inhabitants of Timbuctoo. The manly bearing of the trading Moors, who come over to Gibraltar with morocco cushions, slippers, and various other well-wrought fabrics, contrasts very favourably with the abject appearance and

manners of the Jew residents, and even the lower class of "Rock Scorpions." The wool-clad tribes of the Atlas mountains are the wildest looking human creatures I ever saw.

The Spaniard is so manly a fellow, and apparently so capable of everything noble and generous, that one the more regrets the peculiar circumstances of his social position, which seem to warp his sentiments the wrong way, to foster every fierce, vindictive passion, and narrow prejudice. Even more to be deprecated is the evil training of the Spanish woman—a character whose noble devotion, strong affections, and unmeasured enthusiasm, are given to superstition, gallantry and the bull-fight. Of the three I believe the last to be the most fatal, for it comes sooner into play. The first great treat of a Spanish child is the bull-fight, and it is initiated with its horrors at a time of life when cruelty is natural, for all children, till they have been taught better are cruel, and the ignorant continue so through life. A Spanish child almost before it can stand, is playing at bull-fights. With a rush or a straw it squats about

the room a cantering picador ; or, as an imaginary matador, measures another's neck wherein to inflict the final stab. Whether the bull-fight tends to harden the heart, and encourage every fierce and violent passion, the following description of one at Ronda may suffice to prove. Such things have been again and again described, but every spectator may see something new, and at any rate it will remind us of the fact that such scenes are the resort of the most refined, and the noblest of a civilized country, which is also of a pretentious, and almost exclusive, Christianity.

Mounted on good stout Andalusian horses, and attended by a guide and a sumpter-horse for the carpet-bags, each being also accommodated with the small national saddle-bag, *alforja*, which answered every purpose of a pair of capacious pockets, being also in uniform, and formidably provided with holster pistols, my friend and self ambled at a good shuffling Spanish pace, partly along the beach, and partly by an excellent road to the town of St. Roque, about five miles distant from Gibraltar. Halting

here only to take a stirrup-cup of capital chocolate, for which most Spanish towns are famous, we entered a rather blind road through a rough but beautiful country, partly heath, partly wood, with little or no cultivation, and very few inhabitants till we came to the outskirts of the cork wood, an extensive forest, lying on undulating ground enclosed by rugged mountains.

It is impossible to traverse this wild region without being most forcibly reminded of the description in the "Faery Queen," and the old romances. There is a grim quaintness which it only requires night and a Ratcliff imagination to aggravate into fantastic horror, in the rugged stems of the cork trees, and their gnarled and many-elbowed arms. One begins almost to look for some bleared old hag, bent upon pointing out the wrong way, which shall lead to the stronghold of a Giant Despair or Slay-good. Far from this being the case, we came, after some miles' travelling through the forest, within sight of the white walls of a convent of Capuchin Friars, and on just opening the

glade in which the building stands, we stumbled upon two of the reverend inmates. They were out shooting, and a more singular costume for the *chasse* could scarcely be devised. One was a stout, brawny, middle-aged man, a prototype of Friar Tuck; the other a short slender person. They were clothed in the conventual robe of white serge, with a girdle of black beads; a garment so comprehensive that, extending as it did from the neck to the heels, and being besides furnished with a cape hanging behind, no other dress whatever seemed necessary. Indeed, I should have been probably at this moment in ignorance of their wearing any other, had I not witnessed on a subsequent occasion my stout and reverend friend toss off the sacerdotal robe, and exhibit his person in a short brown jacket and pair of buckskins, which enclosed limbs decidedly more like a priest than a layman; and, seizing a guitar, he not only played, but danced with one of his female parishioners the most spirited fandango I saw executed in Spain, and with which he and his reverend brethren ushered in the new year, to

the vast delight of a numerous company, who dropped in at twelve at night for that especial purpose.

The elder and stouter priest carried a gun, and was creeping stealthily under cover of a tree to get a shot at something concealed among the holly-bushes; while, close behind him, walked the second friar, his finger thrust out past the body of the first, to whom he indicated the whereabouts of the object with much earnest whispering.

We instantly pulled up—as spoiling sport of any kind was the last thing we should think of—and sat in anxious silence, nothing doubting that the game which could bring out two Capuchin friars in full canonicals, their shaven heads glistening in the hot morning sun, and their drapery running sad risks in the brambly thicket, must be of some importance—a boar or a deer at the very least.

Presently the stout priest caught sight of the object, and slowly brought up his gun. No; he could not cover the right spot, so he took it down again.



“Either in the forehead, your reverence,” we could scarcely refrain from whispering, “through the neck, or close behind the fore-leg: be merciful to the haunch or gammon, for your own sake as well as his, and don’t even maul his spare-rib if you can help it.”

Presently the smaller man succeeded in his pointing, and the sportsman raised his gun in earnest, and fired.

“*Está muerto!*” shouted both, as they rushed forward, regardless of the white surge.

“*Está aca,*” said one, “*mas abajo.*”

“No, no,” cried the other; “*aquí, aquí!*”

We were off our horses in a moment, and surrounding the thick bush, ready to give the *coup de grace* with a pistol-shot or sword-thrust if necessary; but we could see nothing. A curious thing to require a retriever to find a boar shot at ten paces distance.

“Ah ha!” said one of the priests, plunging forward, and seizing something. “*Mira! mira! un tordillo tan gordo!* Such a fine thrush!”

The convent was in truth somewhat out of our way from St. Roque to Gaucin ; but having a whole day to do thirty miles in, we came a little round to take breakfast there. A scene more retired or fit for contemplation can scarcely be imagined. The convent stands a little out of the thick wood, with pleasant pasture glades about it, but an appearance of perfect solitude. Arriving at the same time as ourselves, were two gentlemen butchers, exceedingly well dressed, armed and mounted. They were going to kill a bull in the forest, to shoot him, pack his precious portions on a couple of horses, and so take him home.

From the cork wood we traversed a wild and interesting woody country till we descended into the valley of the Guadiaro, not a town or village all the way ; though now and then we came upon some unexpected cottage, buried in orange trees, and its walls so overhung with vines, that nothing of the material of the house could be seen. This was sure to be a *venta*, and a tumbler of sweet white wine, as strong

as sherry, with white, crisp bread, and a whole bagful of oranges, helped to speed us on the way.

Although the romance of this beautiful country would be lost by the snug hedgerows, and cockney villas of civilization, one cannot, without some feeling of regret, witness the utter waste to which it is consigned. Without a single road practicable for any kind of wheel carriage, it is in some places barely accessible on horseback; scarcely any communication between the towns, but such as is carried on by smugglers, there is no hope of opening out its resources, or scarcely making them known. But to a lover of old story the place is perfect: he rides up a natural staircase of rock to an old town, perched like a bird's nest upon the most inaccessible peak of the mountain, passes under the old Moorish horseshoe arch, in the plaster of which the arrow-heads of the Christian assailants are yet sticking, and looks out upon the wild mountain-sides, even now more wild and less accessible than they were four centuries ago.

Fording the Guadiaro thirteen times, as it wound its eccentric course through the sandy valley, nearly covered with oleanders, we came to the steep hill on the summit of which stands Gaucin; a town of rough inhabitants, of a villainous physiognomy, uncivil manners, and a propensity to extortion. Excellent black wine they have, however; and of a potency likely to be discovered by those who venture upon it too freely after a hot ride.

Two things are, especially, to be got rid of by a traveller in Spain: one is, impatience, with a bullying, hasty manner—a very usual characteristic of our countrymen, under the manifold inflictions of discomfort at bed and board. With firm, dignified suavity, and an occasional joke, or a quaint proverb, the indolent obstinacy of the people is soon overcome. The other thing to drop by the way, if possible, is a dislike of garlic. In the better class of inns this is less material; but in those of smaller pretensions, unless you can achieve it, every meal and mouthful is a dose of physic; even the plain boiled eggs taste of it—from the

hens taking kindly to the fragrant vegetable, as well as their keepers.

From Gaucin you keep along the mountain side of the Sierra, passing through some dirty villages and small towns, and catching delightful views into the valleys and back over the Mediterranean and Gibraltar, till you arrive in the curious old town of Ronda, across a bridge, which spans a ravine some hundred feet deep. It is a good town, generally clean, contains some excellent houses, inhabited by people apparently well to do. From one of these, as we strolled about the Alameyda, a beautiful little girl, of about nine years of age, dressed in the extremity of Spanish dandyism, and with plaited hair hanging all down her back, ran out with a large and beautiful bouquet of flowers, with which she presented us.

That evening the professional bull-fighters arrived, and were quite lions in the coffee-houses. The favourite drink, a very strong rum-punch, intensely iced.

Notwithstanding the fun which was going on, there seemed a singular listlessness among

the people, as if they were reserving their excitement for the bull-fights. Even the theatre mustered a heavy, listless audience, except under the influence of the Cachucha: anything more absurdly dreary than the comedy, could scarcely be imagined. The great joke of the piece being, that every one acting in it, high and low, were reduced to some difficulty or strait, and as a refuge jumped simply into a cave, with the exclamation, “A tierra!”

The Plaza de Toros, or bull-ring in Ronda, is said to be the largest in Spain, and shaped like a Roman amphitheatre, open at the top, with a spacious arena in the centre, and having a barrier some five feet high between it and the audience, forming a passage, in which the bull-fighters take refuge when hard pressed, and where the carriers of water and fire—two cries perpetually repeated—wander about to supply the smoking and the thirsty.

As the afternoon sun is still powerful, the shady side of the house commands a higher price, and the seats in the sun fill last. The

Spanish ladies now put on all their bravery, their highest combs, their finest veils, their most glossy new black silk. Some who think to outdo their neighbours, appear in bonnets and coloured dresses; but these, happily, are rare; and the extreme dowdiness, want of style, and conspicuous unbecomingness of such a change, will, it is hoped, be the means of confirming the great majority in the old national costume. It is scarcely to be credited how comparatively ungraceful, how swarthy, how plain a Spanish lady becomes, when she abandons the mantilla!

Cantering about the arena are three sorrily-mounted cavaliers, their limbs and bodies padded to deformity; and having rather the appearance of bloated dropsical patients, than the representatives of the old high-born chivalry who were wont to risk life and limb in such encounters. Each man carries a long spear, the point of which is muffled to within less than an inch, the object being not to kill the bull, but merely to turn him in his charge. Besides the horsemen were some dozen of active young men on foot, dressed in blue

silk jackets, gay sashes, short breeches, and silk stockings, and variously provided with flags and other means of irritating the bull, or drawing him from a prostrate horseman. The finisher of the tragedy, the matador, only comes forward at the closing scene.

As the ladies settle into their places, their excitement is becoming extreme; there is a perpetual rattle of fans over the house, while the men sit doggedly smoking their cigaritos.

We had heard much of the unusual ferocity of the bulls—how they came from a wild forest rarely invaded by man, and consequently what capital sport might be expected.

Presently the preparatory bell rings, and the fighters take their accustomed places; the horsemen, one behind the other, close to the barrier on the left of the door through which the bull is to enter, that being the safest position; to be caught in the centre of the arena is almost certain of an overthrow. The fire and water cries are hushed as the rumble of the withdrawing bolts is heard, the men hold the cigars suspended in their fingers for a moment, the



ladies strain like greyhounds in the slips, the children can scarcely be restrained from clapping their hands and calling aloud, when wide-open flies the door, and a noble cream-coloured bull rushes wildly into the centre of the arena.

He is by no means to be confounded in the reader's mind with the heavy monarch of the English pastures, to whom indeed he bears as much resemblance as a thorough-bred hunter of great bone and power does to a dray-horse. He is active in the extreme, alertly fierce and savage, and instead of the small curved horns of the English breed, his have a most formidable spread, and are little less than a yard long.

The first rush of the bull is extremely fine: he seems to feel that he has been trepanned and insulted. Lured from the depths of the forest by some trained Dalilah, he has been forced into ignominious confinement, teased and maddened during his stay; and at the last moment, as he comes from the den, a man, conveniently placed above the gateway, thrusts into his neck a small spike, to which

are attached long fluttering ribbons of, to him, the most offensive colours. Scarcely having seen a human creature in his life, he is now surrounded by thousands—screaming, yelling, clapping their hands, rattling their fans, and crying, “Viva toro!” “Hu toro!” in every variety of tone and voice.

For a few seconds he turns round in wild bewilderment, every muscle on the strain for action, but puzzled upon whom to vent his rage. By accident, he seems to catch sight of the leading picador; it is the first tangible enemy he has seen. He does not hesitate a moment; with raised tail and lowered head, he wildly charges the horse. Now is the time for the picador’s strength and coolness: he receives the bull upon the spear, the small point of which is just sufficient to fix it in the inner shoulder, and with great adroitness turns him from the horse, and passes him on, as it were, to the man behind him. Seeing another enemy in front, the bull rarely turns, but rushes upon the second. This hapless picador failed in his guard—he was probably nervous, for he

looked very pale—the bull forced himself within the spear's length, and lowering his head, buried the long horns in the horse's body. He fairly lifted man and horse from the ground, and hurled them down against the barrier. In vain did the unfortunate horse struggle and try to rise, while the deep gasps spoke of his mortal agony. Again and again did the bull bury the long horns in him, till his entrails were nearly dragged from his body. He stood over him till he was quite dead, the least heave or movement of the dying animal being met by a fresh plunge.

The whole theatre rings with the cries of "Viva toro!" "He is not only fierce, but cunning!" "He is a dangerous bull!" "The sport is capital!" "Viva toro!" "What a noble bull!"

But where is the man all this time? Prostrate on the ground without motion; it is his only chance. Well padded, and secured with splints and thick boots, he has suffered nothing from the kicks and struggles of the dying horse. His eyes are shut, he scarcely dares to

breathe, though it is a position to make the breath come quickly. The bull has some dim notions that his work is incomplete; and when the horse ceases to kick, he pauses dubiously over the man.

“Viva toro! Now, brave bull, all you have done is nothing. Your enemy still lies before you scathless, sneaking, feigning to be that which I wish to see him. Can you see no heaving of that waistcoat, O brave but stupid bull? Shake the blood from your eyes, and look harder. I am excited in the hope of that man’s death. I, poorest of gentlemen, would give a hundred dollars to see the red horn go in under that sash, and be thrust up chestwards till it protruded at the shoulder. And for the like treatment of some half-dozen of the skipping gentlemen in blue silk, I would double the offer.

“O brave bull! if you had but the sense to know, and could convey in some bovine language to those within, that you might by so doing get rid of this horrid sport, that you would strike a fair blow for this besotted people

as well as yourselves, you would not, I think, hesitate, O brave bull !”

It is in vain that the bandarilleros and other skipping gentlemen in silk and ribbons try to draw him from the prostrate man and horse. Not till everything is quite quiet in that quarter does he return, and swiftly following one of the skipping gentleman across the arena, gives a toss at the barrier so exactly at the moment that the man vaults over it, that you cannot for an instant realise whether he is jerked into the air by the bull’s impetus or his own.

A horseman is unexpectedly out-flanked by this charge, and spurs onward to get a better position ; but in vain, the bull is after him, has got under his horse’s flank, hurled him down, and gored him to death. It is impossible to conceive a finer bull than this ; and “ Viva toro !” is uttered in a storm of applause.

In truth, the bull-fighters are getting somewhat shy of him. He is so quick and dextrous, so earnest in his work, that they hardly venture to stick crackers in him, or

fresh spikes with ribbons, and the like feats, which make up the comic part of the performance.

The matador now presents himself; and holding his straight shining sword aloft, asks permission to kill the bull.

“No, no, no!” shouts the audience with one accord. “Away! off, off! this brave bull must not be so soon dismissed; we must have more sport out of this brave bull.” The Alcalde sees the temper of the house, waves his hand, and the matador retires—in time, for the bull is after him, stupidly bent on destroying his only friend: a chulo benevolently attempting to draw off the bull’s attention is attacked himself, and for bare life leaps the barrier—the bull after him, clearing the five-foot fence as if it were a hurdle, driving the fire and water men out of the alley into the arena for safety. The applause is tremendous; the ladies rise from their seats to cheer the brave bull, who drives all before him.

Still there is one picador, carefully manœuvring to keep a good position, where he

can use his lance, if attacked. He keeps briskly in motion, galloping round to get behind the bull, and so ensure a front attack, if any. At last his turn comes—his lance is forced back, his horse deeply gored; and again a second time a chulo bravely catches the bull by the tail, and is sent sprawling on the ground by a kick on the shin. The unhappy chulo limps away with assistance amidst a roar of laughter, renewed ten-fold when a report spreads that one of the leg bones is broken. Such an incident changes the diversion to a broad farce.

But this little episode has given the picador time to escape a third goring, and he canters on, his horses entrails dragging on the ground. He attempts to release them with his spear: they embarrass him, and a chulo cuts them off with his knife. The poor horse staggers feebly on; but even in this pitiable condition is reserved for another attack, and the wound is plugged with tow.

At length the matador is called for; a grave, middle-aged manly fellow, dressed in tight

clothes of silk and velvet ; his hair enclosed in a montero cap, his full bunchy black whiskers trimmed round, as is the Spanish fashion, and setting off his full fleshy face. He walks with dignity to the front of the Alcalde's box, and makes a short speech. He is the most renowned matador in Spain—countless the cows he has widowed. He holds aloft his long, straight, two-edged sword, narrow in the blade, but very heavy, and pointed like a penknife : an awkward instrument, it seems, to deliver neatly as the bull rushes upon him ; for if it goes beside the vertebræ he has failed. But he is confident. He is the man to do it—he says so. May he, with his worship's leave, proceed ?

The Alcalde nods his head. “Do it !” With slow and measured pace he walks into the centre of the ring. His is the really dangerous office, for when a man is killed, it is almost always the matador.

The brute looks carelessly at him ; so furious before, he seems tamed with his triumphs. Surely he won't turn craven at last ? The



audience waver in their opinion. Disapprobation is expressed ; some of the ladies even mutter “Cobarde !” Such is popular favour ; a single fault outweighs the merit of a whole career. “Abajo !” down with the coward bull !

The matador flaps a scarf at him ; but the bull, unmoved, has fixed him with his eye. Suddenly, without warning, he rushes on the matador—full at the centre of his body.

I am not disposed to offer another hundred dollars for the matador’s life, for it is a fair stand-up fight between the bull and him ; no horse is dragged into the torture ; and two horns with superior strength may be thought a fair set-off to a long sword and dexterity.

The matador is taken somewhat by surprise ; it is the nature of the bull to defeat calculation. His thrust is too late and aside ; the sword enters beside the spine, and a foot of the blade comes out through the shoulder. The wound is trifling, and the man recovers his sword. The ladies are not pleased that the bull did not fall dead, for everybody had counted on the skill of that famous matador. Never mind,

here he comes again. The man, to make up for the failure, shows an extra degree of daring: he runs to meet the bull; drops the scarf as he charges, and plunges the long blade up to the hilt in his spine. Slowly drooping, the noble animal vomits a torrent of blood, and falls dead.

Enter four beautiful mules, gaily caparisoned and tinkling with bells; a rope is thrown round the bull's neck, and he is whisked away at a gallop. The dead horses follow, fresh sawdust is sprinkled, the ladies chat together with excessive animation, and all are ready for the next performance. With the exception of a slight shriek from some foreign female, new to the sport, when the first horse fell, there is not a sign of pity given out by that vast assemblage.

I suppose the charm of these exhibitions is to be found in the answer of one of our consul's daughters, who was present on this occasion: "I like a bull-fight, it exthithes me tho."

It was on the road leading down from

Gaucin to the valley of the Guadiaro, that three English officers returning to Gibraltar from shooting met a party of twelve well-cloaked Spaniards, finely mounted, and preceded by one who seemed the leader, by whom they were courteously saluted. As is customary on such occasions, when making long rides, their guns were in leather cases, and slung over their shoulders. No danger or molestation was apprehended; so many of the garrison were in the habit of wandering about on similar enterprises without interruption, that not a shadow of suspicion crossed their minds. The road was narrow—a mere path—rocky and steep, and when some four or five had passed, the rear of the Spaniards closed up, and impeded the way. Suddenly, at a signal from the leader, the cloaks were thrown back, and each man presented a short brass blunderbuss at the travellers. It is not in the nature of Englishmen to give in at once, so there was a vain attempt to unsling the guns, and one gentleman presented a pocket-pistol which he had at hand. The leader smiled; requested them at once to

cease all fruitless efforts, pointed to the twelve cocked blunderbusses with an intimation that the touch of three triggers only would enforce obedience, if milder measures should fail: that he meant them no harm, but civil treatment—no rudeness was ever executed, unless he were driven to it, by José Maria.

The sportsmen found themselves in the power of the most renowned robber in Spain. They were then, with the blunderbusses still pointed at them, requested to give up their arms, which being discharged, were slung at the saddles of the Spaniards; and being made to mount behind three of the troop, their own horses were led by three others. In this order they descended the mountain, and having crossed the valley, rode up a steep mountain on the opposite side, their horses having been well galloped over some heavy ground to tire them, and diminish the chance of an escape, if by any accident they should regain them.

Near the summit of a lofty mountain they found a half ruinous cottage, inhabited by two females, evidently well acquainted with the

gang, and here it was intimated to the prisoners that they were to pass the night. The horses were picquetted, videttes posted, and each officer had two men appointed to guard him. A consultation then took place as to the disposal of the prisoners, when it was finally agreed, that at the earliest dawn one of the English officers should proceed alone to Gibraltar, and return by a certain hour in the afternoon with the required ransom, which was fixed at about forty pounds each for two of them, and sixty for him who had rashly drawn the pistol. The officers were then allowed to choose their messenger, to whom it was carefully explained that he would be watched from the hills on his return, and that if accompanied by any force, or even a single person, or if any alarm were given in the country, a signal would be made to the main body of the band, and his friends' throats incontinently cut ; that a similar fate would also await them if he failed in bringing the money to the time, and in hard cash.

It would be hard to say which had the more

disagreeable office, he who went to procure the money, or they who staid behind with José Maria. The consternation in the garrison was extreme. No difficulty occurred in procuring the whole of the money on the single account of the messenger; it was understood to be advanced in the kindest manner by an English lady, then resident at the rock, to whom the three officers were scarcely known.

As the appointed hour drew on, the prisoners on the hill were frequently reminded of the penalty which hung over them. The long national knife was from time to time drawn across their throats, with a sort of fierce pleasantry, which, nevertheless, plainly enough showed it was not intended wholly as a joke. At a signal from a distant hill, a party was dispatched upon the road to receive the money, probably to prevent their whereabouts being seen through telescopes, and at a second signal, the robbers rapidly departed, leaving our friends to rejoin their companion.

From Gibraltar to Corfu, one of the most beautiful spots on the face of this earth. A

foreground of palaces, interspersed with old, quaint, Venetian houses, bosomed in olives, orange-trees and myrtle; and a lake like sea, encompassed by snow-clad mountains.

With the Greeks, you feel yourself introduced to a new type of humanity: orientals in dress, they have more than European quickness and ingenuity. Shrewd, active, capable, ingenious, they are fickle and faithless; impulsive in the extreme; lazy, and lovers of pleasure; sunk in the grossest superstition; a chattering, lively, ardent, aimless race; of defeated capacities, and energies thrown away.

Throughout these regions there is a story in every yard of ground. With the "Odyssey" in hand, you trace the features of the scene so absolutely truthful, that the descriptions must have been drawn on the spot. There is the old harbour, now very shallow and deserted, though probably covering the same area it did in the time of Homer, and just beyond its mouth is the tall rock into which Ulysses' ship was changed. The Temple of Neptune still survives in its ruins; and though the site of

the old city is an olive-grove, you can scarce turn over the ground without finding, in the shape of pottery, coins, or ancient clay weights, the evidence of its existence.

From the opposite coast Achilles took his myrmidons; Actium and Lepanto—"Suli's rock, and 'Pargas' shore"—are a little below. It is but a few hours to "Leucadia's Cape," and where "sad Penelope o'erlooked the wave."

The surpassing beauty of these regions is painful to witness, sunk as the inhabitants are in an absorbing superstition, which blights every progressive energy, and while possessing the subtlest talents, bring little but chicanery to perfection. Once a-year, the dead body of St. Spiridion—a blackened, disgusting mummy, enclosed in a glass case, enriched with diamonds and other precious stones—is brought out, and carried in grand procession round the esplanade, attended by senators, officials, a band of music, and thousands of the peasantry in their holiday clothes, attracted from great distances to witness the spectacle. Nor did an English Lord High Commissioner, on one occasion, think it im-



proper to lend his presence to the triumphal progress of this canonized carrion. Well may we exclaim, when will religion be emancipated from such degrading accessories, from the vulgarisms, as well as its frauds and loathsomeness, with which men have invested its pure abstract simplicity?

Early on a Good Friday morning, almost every house above a labourer's cottage in the villages of Corfu have tied to the door-post, a lamb, which, being slaughtered before noon, a large cross is painted with its blood upon the door-posts, or outer wall, which remain generally well preserved throughout the year. In the capital town there are fewer lambs, but still many; the citizens reserving their enthusiasm for the exciting demonstration at noon.

No sooner has twelve o'clock struck, than a fusillade commences all over the town; a stranger would imagine an insurrection. Everybody possessed of a fire-arm of any kind—gun, musket, pistol, or blunderbuss—brings it out to his front door or window, and fires it into the street as fast as he can load; and this

continues as long as his powder lasts. The more he can increase the report by heavy wadding or other means, so much the better. The gunmakers, on this occasion, gather quite a harvest, as well from the loan of guns to other houses, or from persons paying small sums for the privilege of firing from the shop.

But it is after the fusillade that comes the chief demonstration of the day. All through the year careful housewives have saved all the broken crockery for this occasion. Repairers of china and glass find no favour in Corfu. Careless maids and giddy pages have ready forgiveness; and in no other place have I seen a lady so entirely "mistress of herself, though china fall."

When all the gunpowder is expended, that of the crockery begins. Taking it to the upper rooms, they commence throwing the broken fragments into the street, with horrid imprecations directed against the Jewish race generally, with an occasional digression in favour of their own townsfolks. "As I throw

out this mass of broken glass, so may the souls of all Jews, past and present, be cast into Hell!" "As these old coffee-cups will be splintered on the stones, so may every hope of mercy be broken to the accursed race!" "As I hurl forth this old decanter, so may my neighbour, old Levi, be cast into the bottomless pit!" "As this basin and jug fly into fragments, so may Moses and Son be smashed!"

By the time the broken crockery is all gone, they are too far gone to stop. The Greeks are an excitable, impulsive people, and the torrent, once let loose, is not to be restrained; besides there seems something heartier and more in earnest in throwing out sound things than broken ones; so out go the jugs and basins, and other family utensils—the best china, the bottles and glasses, the pickle-jars and flower-pots—everything they can lay hands upon; in fact, till their crockery as well as their cursing are alike exhausted. Rather foolish, perhaps, they look, when all is over, and they find the house cleared of all the brittle ware; not unaccompanied, perhaps, with some

slight misgiving that the souls of the Jews may not, after all, be so substantially damaged as their own pockets.

And what are the Jews doing all this time? Many of the more timid families betake themselves to the citadel betimes in the forenoon, and there remain all day, the rest close their shutters and lock themselves up in their houses. In either stage of the popular fury, their lives would not be safe if abroad. Gathered together in their shops, or the small dingy rooms at the back of them, the family cower together, and hear themselves and their race consigned to everlasting perdition. All the old sores and heart-burnings of the year are ripped up—the rivalries of trade or of fortune. It is in vain for the smashers to disclaim all personal motives—to say, “I don’t so particularly damn Mr. Aaron because he sold me a coat made with long stitches and rotten cloth; I simply damn him and his, because his ancestors crucified our merciful Redeemer eighteen hundred years ago; and for which he and they cannot be too vehemently anathematized now and in all time to come. So here goes the foot-tub as

a desired type of his total confusion and ruin."

All this would be overwhelming to the unfortunate Israelites, were it not for one reflection, which cannot fail to come over them at every smash, and must tend greatly to alleviate the heavy load of curses with which they are accompanied: *almost the whole trade in crockery and glass is in their own hands*; so that the more is broken, the more business must inevitably accrue to them: in fact, most of the breakage must be replaced by them, at an increased price, within a day or two. Keeping this in view, we may imagine how quietly they bear their cursing; what significant looks pass round the family as the breaking goes on; and how very difficult it must be to restrain a propensity to roar with laughter when the sound of valuable crockery comes into play. An artist might select a worse subject for a picture than a Jewish family at Corfu on a Good-Friday.

In point of scenery, Corfu is a paradise; neither does the climate fall far short of that

standard. To a sportsman, it offers peculiar attractions; for not only can he indulge his propensity with almost every bird recognized as game, but his pursuit is invested with a spice of adventure among the wild natives of Albania, and the mouldering ruins of other times, meet him at every turn, and “make the past predominate over the present.” He may either beat up his woodcocks from the dense myrtle covers of the island, or cross the strait—eight or ten miles—to Albania.

The most civilized place on the immediately opposite coast is Butrinto—the Buthrotum of the Romans, and the traditional country of Achilles and Pyrrhus. Here is to be found in the marshes almost every species of wild-fowl, from pelicans to gargany and teal, woodcocks in every cover, and snipes so numerous that they provokingly interrupt your pursuit of the larger game. But a little way retired from the landing place deer and wild boar are fallen in with.

At the edge of the marshy plain by the side of a swift river, issuing out of a lake embosomed in hills, is an old Turkish fort, the residence of the Agha, and on the opposite side

of the stream abruptly rises a steep, woody promontory, crowned with an old Roman castle, the walls of which enclose some acres of ground, and jutting out into the lake, the opposite coasts of which exhibit a fine park-like scenery to the foot of the nearer mountains, above the tops of which the snowy peaks of a more distant range stand clear against the sky.

The promontory upon which stands the Roman fortress is almost wholly clothed with bay-trees, which though still retaining the character of a bush, rise to a height of forty or fifty feet. Excepting a few fields near the villages, the country wild and uncultivated, is occupied by the wandering Albanians and their cattle.

Connecting the promontory on which stands the old castle with the mountain, is a ledge of rocks, high above the lake and the marshes, but lower than the promontory or the hill. Across this ledge at sunset fly from the lake to the marshes innumerable flocks of wild-fowl, and here, after the day's shooting had terminated, we usually expended our surplus ammunition. It was a wild, melancholy scene: the

old castle, whose story, and even date, had gone out from all tradition and history ; the gigantic mountains, echoing to the yelp of a jackal or the bay of the fierce shepherd dogs, and not unfrequently there came up the cackling of female laughter from the Agha's hareem, from which it might be inferred that His Highness had said a good thing.

To those who can pitch their guns and fire the instant they see a speck in the air, this night shooting is excellent ; a poking shot, however he may enjoy the other accessories of the scene, will have but slender hopes of filling his bag. Now and then an Albanian sportsman, in red cap, sheepskin cloaks, white linen kilt, and a whole arsenal of arms stuck in his showy striped silk sash, would take his seat upon the duck pass, and when he saw a more than usually dense mass of fowl above him, he would discharge his long gun with a report like a small piece of artillery.

Nor was the Agha himself without a love of sport, though he indulged it in a more characteristic way. Provided with a supply of English gunpowder, which it was our incli-



nation as well as policy to afford him, for he was essentially obliging, as well as possessing the admirably gentlemanlike manners of the better class of Turks. Armed with his English powder, his Highness shuffled out to the cover side, at a time when he knew the hares would come out to feed, and there seating himself, he lighted his pipe and patiently awaited the game, which some of his half dozen soldiers were gently hastening out of the wood, by taking a circuit and walking down towards the Agha. His Highness is not a man for snap-shots; but give him time to lay down his pipe, to raise his gun, and hold it steady while the tedious process of combustion goes on between the pan and the barrel, and (Inshallah!) most likely he will knock over the hare—particularly if she sits up to listen. Neither is the Agha prepared in costume for the active duties of the chase. His yellow slippers, down at heel, would speedily disappear in the clay, and his enormous small-clothes, of a tender fabric, would be a wilful temptation to the *acacia detinens*, whose hooks even buckskin can hardly resist.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A WHOLE TURN OF THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

WHILE sojourning in the island of Corfu, and preparing to make an extended tour through Greece and Asia Minor, an event happened of so totally unexpected a character, that I may justly term it the third great event of my life, and probably the most important. I received a letter couched in somewhat mysterious terms, from a London solicitor, requiring me to afford proof of my relationship to a gentleman lately deceased in Scotland, who was, in fact, my mother's brother, though from his entire estrangement from the family, he was scarcely ever mentioned, and believed to be in

indigent circumstances. I had been advised more than once, by Dr. Mellish and others, on the occasion of my disinheritor, to seek out this other uncle, but had neglected the advice. It now appeared, more from the tone than any actual assertions in the lawyer's letter, that he had died possessed of property, and that I was surmised to be his nearest, if not only, relation. In conclusion, I was advised to obtain leave of absence (this time *really* on "urgent private affairs,") and to present myself with such proofs as I could obtain at the solicitor's office in Gray's Inn.

These it was not difficult to afford, but it necessitated a journey into Gloucestershire to procure certified extracts from registers, personal evidence, &c. Being fully instructed by my own legal adviser, I took an early coach, which by dint of almost super-equine powers, accomplished the distance in a day; and I arrived at the close of a summer evening in the little village where resided my good friend Dr. Mellish, and where once I had been an inmate with my eccentric aunt.

There is a soothing melancholy, not unaccompanied by disappointment, in revisiting old scenes such as these. The features of the country, as well as the buildings, are dwarfed in their actual dimensions to what they existed in the imagination. The village inn, with the alteration of the daily coach, which I remembered as an hotel of the first magnitude, was now cut down to a roadside ale-house. Old familiar faces had disappeared from the place ; but the well-remembered linaments were traceable in the fresh and stalwart forms of a new generation. The blacksmith, the wheelwright, the cooper, all seemed nearly the same as before, though unaccountably grown younger ; and in the tripping and mincing misses of the village, I recognised the tripping and mincing of their mothers twenty years before.

Loneliness and desolation seemed to have reached their height in my aunt's cottage. It had never been tenanted since. Grass grew on the pathways ; a bar or two of the gate had been carried away ; the door was cracked, and the paint peeled off, and the flower-beds and

shrubberies were turned into a wilderness. It was a dead house, and a solitary robin up in the plane-tree was singing its elegy. This indeed, was the only sound heard, except an occasional female voice calling a truant child in a high falsetto, or the incoherent tones of a fife played by some rustic learner in the remote distance.

As I leant upon the gate, a crowd of overwhelming emotions oppressed me even to tears. It was upon the late occupant of this house that my fortunes seemed to have hinged ; and though subsequent events had tended in some measure to lessen the affection I originally entertained for her, yet the old scene recalled the old feelings. She was at rest, as was every relation I had ever recognised or knew ; and I had come to look with more of pity than anger on their schemes and jealousies, their obstinacies and affectations. In the old cottage I seemed to recognize the only surviving impersonation of former years, helpless in decay, and preparing to follow the others.

While still leaning on the gate, a feeble old voice addressed me :

“It is to be let, Sir. It is to be let.”

I knew him at once: it was Dr. Mellish. I fairly caught him in my arms, and hugged him. Alas! for the prodigies of life's last scene: the Doctor did not recognise me; and from the vivacity of my embrace, naturally took me for either a lunatic or a highwayman—a delusion which I found it impossible wholly to remove; and his feeble but hurried efforts to get home, feeling his watch from time to time, while he pretended to believe all I said to keep me quiet, placed me in the painful position of half-laughing, half-crying—changed entirely to the latter, when the Doctor had got within his own gate, and with all his former pluck collared me, and called upon his servants for assistance.

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Every satisfactory proof of my identity and relationship being forthcoming, I waited upon the legal firm entrusted with the executorship of my late Scotch uncle's will; and was quickly informed that the estate consisted of landed property to the amount of about one thousand

two hundred pounds a-year, and there was a sum of upwards of seventy thousand pounds in the various Government securities, all of which would be handed over to me on the execution of certain papers now in process of drawing up. The will was remarkably short, it merely devised all the property to descend or pass, according to law, to the next heir; and was witnessed by two tradesmen in the village near which he lived.

If I were required to point out a sensation more intensely pleasurable than any other, I should certainly say it was that of walking the streets of London on the unexpected accession of a good fortune, coming after a life of some privations and disappointments; the recipient being in hale and vigorous health, his tastes and habits somewhat chastened by experience, and not unconscious of a capacity to spend his newly-acquired treasures, with benefit to himself, and advantage to his friends. He can scarcely indeed be said to walk, so buoyed up is he with the consciousness of power. The little tenacities of his character

have vanished in a moment: he exacts nothing, for he knows that all he wants—almost all he sees—is within his reach. Pride, in its unfavourable sense, he cannot or ought not, to feel. An universal *bonhommie* comes over him, which seeks every occasion for exercise—which must indeed have vent, or of what use is the acquisition of power?

In the short walk from Gray's Inn to the old Salopian Coffee-house, I had already built myself a castle of moderate dimensions in the western regions of the town, with some dim imaginings of a country retreat buried in fruit and flowers; and something even more faintly shadowed out amongst the hills, with heather to the door, and grey rock, and mountain streams, and lakes, and glens, and grouse. I had already my compact and well-selected library, my choice pictures, and my furniture, comprising the last contributions of ingenuity to comfort. I had surrounded myself with my choicest friends, and had already consulted their well-known taste in the arrangement of their rooms. By the time I arrived at Charing



Cross, I had determined my course should be this: sterling, rational enjoyment—no display, everything of the very best, no increase of acquaintance, and a kick for those who, having gently dropped me in my altered fortunes, might be induced to renew the acquaintance upon this other turn.

But I am even now undecided whether the dreams of Alnaschar are not more rapturous than the waking certainties of Rothschild. In my walk up Piccadilly that evening, I met an honourable friend, elated even more than myself with the prospective acquisition of untold wealth. Seizing me by the hand, he dragged me into a retired street, and informed me, with many extravagant gestures, that he had found it out at last! “I have conquered the chances, my dear fellow, and I make you a partaker of my good fortune. My present small capital obliges me to run it in silver; with a couple of hundred pounds I can run it in gold, and secure as many thousands by the week’s end!”

All this was gibberish to me, but he insisted upon explaining his system practically; so,

linking me firmly by the arm, he dragged rather than led me to the well-known gambling-house in St. James's Street, where, many years before, fortune had so pleasantly smiled upon me.

A great change had taken place in that establishment. The rooms were as well furnished, or even more so, than on my former visit, but there was somewhat more of distrust in the officials. The doors—and I think there were three—were all well, and even, to my thinking, superfluously barred and fastened. Each was provided with a small peep-hole, from which to reconnoitre the comers, and many signs and pass-words were exchanged before we were admitted into the sanctum. The company, too, was different, a large portion being foreigners of no very reputable mien, and the *ensemble* of the guests of a decidedly lower order than in the palmy days of 1813.

My friend was received with great attention, and chairs being placed for us at the supper-table, we were invited to solace the inward man before engaging in the serious business of the evening. The game, I observed, was no longer

English hazard, as of yore, but *rouge et noir*.

My friend called for champagne, which was promptly supplied; and in discussing the cold and grateful beverage, he opened the plan of his campaign. "The plan I go upon," said he, is a martingale."

"A martingale?"

"Yes, an original one; not the slow one of the *coups arriérés*, but devised and pricked down from my own head. I imagine six events in this way: say red, red, black, red, black, red; I mark them down on the card. Now, what do you think are the chances against the next six events turning up on the table, exactly the same in succession as the six I have marked? I play against these numbers, backing black where I have marked red, and so on; and if they do not come out exactly the same, I win by increasing the stake upon each loss, so as to cover former losses and win something besides. When I win, I commence afresh with No. 1, either of the same scheme of events or a new one. Of course," added my friend, "I do

sometimes run out the whole six, once, perhaps, in an evening ; but I can afford to run out once an hour."

Having unfolded his plan, which he assured me was to make his fortune, and mine too, if I chose to adopt that road to wealth, I handed him over all the ready money I possessed, with a pretty considerable cheque, to be cashed in the event of an unexpected "run out ;" and seating myself at the table, attended with much interest to the proceedings. My friend was methodical in his business. Changing twenty pounds into five shilling counters, he arranged five piles of them before him. No. 1 contained only one counter, No. 2 two counters, No. 3 four counters, No. 4 ten counters, No. 5 ten pounds and two counters. Winning either of these he recovered himself, but to run out the whole martingale involved a loss of fourteen pounds five shillings.

My friend was in luck, for he mostly won upon the single piece he first laid down ; several times he ran out three times, and more than once four times in the course of an hour. In

four hours' play he had run out three times completely, but still was a winner. He had then a run of uninterrupted luck of an hour and a half, and was preparing to leave off, when a fancy seized him of marking five blacks upon his card, against which he ran his martingale, and, as ill-luck would have it, the five blacks came off in succession; but, with a happy audacity, he added another number to the martingale, and recovered himself.

Notwithstanding the plausible character of this game, I am apprehensive that he did not eventually realize money by it. It is, however, certain, that he won near one thousand pounds at Wiesbaden, and when I last saw him, was rejoicing in a martingale of nine numbers at Hamburg, which ranged from one, to twelve hundred, florins, or from one and eightpence to one hundred pounds.

I will not afflict the reader with the details of my sudden prosperity. In due time I succeeded to the property. I was at last brought to anchor in a prosperous haven, and could exclaim with all the confidence of certain

prosperity, *Inveni portum, spes et fortuna valet.*

It was astonishing how readily my retreat was discovered, how many remembered me to whom I seemed scarcely known, and the vast number of new friends who were anxious for the pleasure of my acquaintance—even of my patronage. The exclusive doors of Baker Street flew open at my approach, and the cautious fathers and calculating mothers, who would have looked askance at the mere possessor of an honourable profession, were mollified into ostentatious amenity by the presence of a landed proprietor of fifteen hundred a year, and a fat account with a city banker.

Property, says some one—or rather says everybody—has its duties as well as its rights. An inglorious repose was the last think I could be allowed to cultivate. Every friend had something advantageous to propose—something that, without trouble or risk, would double my income and at the same time increase my power, with agreeable employment. The insurance offices, the loan offices, the gas companies that

wooded the employment of my spare time, it would be idle to enumerate. The scheming secretaries that unfolded their taking plans, and the affluent directors who wished me, almost on my own terms, to become "one of us!"

I sold out of Her Majesty's service forthwith, careless even of the bargain I made, and exchanged without a sigh the niggard certainty of service for the fancied heaven of independence.

Several years rolled on, and I had successfully resisted Gas, Insurance, Loan, and Building Societies, but accustomed to an active life, I began to sigh for something beyond the mild excitement of receiving my rents, and expending them, when in the summer of 1845, I received a note from my respectable solicitor, of which the following is the substance, if not the exact words:—

"Dear Sir,

"If you can make it convenient to call upon me to-morrow between two and three, I think

I can put an agreeable and profitable employment in your way, should you have an hour or two to spare in the day. Do not be later than three, as I am then going into the city.

“Yours very truly,

“S. GAMMON.”

This was very much the sort of thing I wanted, I *had* an hour or two to spare, and a profitable way of filling up that space was about the most agreeable thing he could have put before me.

My friend and legal adviser belonged to a highly-respectable, though somewhat notorious firm, whose offices were located in the neighbourhood of Gray's Inn. They were, without any exception, the most comfortable lawyers' offices I ever saw. Instead of the hard boards and yellow-white wainscot, the dusty shelves and the filthy windows of such places generally, there was an air of refinement and solid comfort throughout. The offices occupied the whole house. Each member of the firm had his separate apartment, which, but for the japanned



tin-boxes arranged on a neat and almost invisible iron frame-work, and labelled with important accounts, and the heaps of tape-tied papers, you would have fancied yourself in a luxurious drawing-room. If left to yourself for ten minutes—which you always were from the great pressure of business under which the firm was vigorously struggling—you looked round upon the boxes and saw with pleasure the enormous confidence which was placed in the house. You figure to yourself the boxes filled with rare old deeds upon which hung the very existence of wealthy families. The future riches of the heiress, and the broad lands of the minor, were virtually enclosed in those tin cases. Dotted amongst them, your attention was arrested by a slight touch of mystery, as “J. B. Esq., mortgage deeds.” This was not difficult to see through. J. B. had no objection to lend his money, but he would have blushed to find it fame, so shrouded his benevolence in initials. Then there were canal and railway deeds, the suggestive “Pigeon, in chancery,” and no end of orphans nestling under the wings of their

trustees. In fact, the word *trust* stared you so broadly in the face, that Didimus himself could not have doubted either the integrity or the stability of the firm.

And you saw all this in the most luxurious and comfortable manner. The carpet was of the thickest pile, the lounging-chair of the most yielding springs; nothing, in a word, could exceed the soothing accessories of the place, but the silky blandness of its inhabitants.

After the usual interval, when it might be supposed that the word *Trust* was pretty well engraved upon my retina, I was summoned to the private apartment of my friend Gammon. I found his table strewed with plans, a heap of letters before him, and other evidences of the intense business in which he was engaged. He plunged at once into the business.

“I suppose,” he said, “you would have no objection to be on the direction of a railway? It’s a new line; and yet in the market—a telling thing depend upon it. We have a large and highly respectable provisional committee, and we are now going to get up the

managing committee, who will do everything of course. I am on the provisional committee, but have not time for the other ;” and here he glanced round at the heap of papers. “I thought, however, that you might like it, and having time on your hands, why, it would be agreeable enough I should think. Besides, you are a man of business, getting in fact rather a warm city man,” and here he chuckled at what was evidently intended as a compliment. .

“But will there be any danger in this?”

“Well,” said Mr. Gammon, “there is no undertaking without some risk, even embarking in a profession is a risk, but I am in it, a pretty good proof that I anticipate nothing wrong, and I should be just as unlikely to drag you into it as myself:” and to give due effect to this flourish, by which I could not fail to be flattered by discovering that my interest was as dear to him as his own, Mr. Gammon executed a graceful shrug, drew his elbows back, advanced his breast a little forwards, and showed the palms of his hands flat to the front, all of

which went to say, "you see what I am—I do all I can to show you my heart. These hands are clean!"

"You see," said Mr. Gammon, unrolling a map of England, down which there appeared a strong red line, "this is the proposed line of railway, 'The direct Bullocksmithy and Bognor Atmospheric.' You see the line is altogether new and untouched upon—interferes with no other whatever—opens out the resources of a virgin country—touches upon large towns between which, hitherto, little or no communication has existed, for the simple reason that there were no roads—or only impassable cross ones. Then, the establishing a new watering place, so to speak, for the manufacturing districts; why, thousands will go down to bathe who never before thought of the sea. Then think of the coal we shall bring down to the coast at something about half, or at any rate, two-thirds of what they can possibly sell for at Shoreham. We undersell them all along that coast, to say nothing of the whole country contiguous to the line, and destroy their trade

at once. This is not a mere idle speculation, got up with a view to run up the shares in the market, but a grand, bold, scheme of internal traffic, based upon the surest principles, and certain of a most ample return. Why, the carriage of the coal alone will pay the expenses of the line. Then the engineering difficulties are a mere nothing: the trifling impediment of the Surrey Hills and Sussex Downs are easily got over; and in the north I understand there is scarcely anything to speak of. The country on the line is not populous, therefore, land will be cheap, and the immense increase in value consequent upon opening it out by a railroad will be enormous, so we have nothing to fear in the way of opposition: in fact, the landowners will be only too happy to take a most moderate price for their land, and will facilitate the carrying out of the undertaking by every means in their power."

"If this line is so advantageous I wonder no one thought of it before."

"That struck me too: it is a wonder."

"Some clever engineer I suppose hit upon it?"

“Why, not exactly. One of the promoters was certainly in the army, but I have understood in the infantry of the line: he may have been an engineer. The other promoter, an able man, an uncommon able man—not, between ourselves, a man of very high standing—an attorney, a most able fellow, but—ahem—the fact is, he does not stand very high in the profession, but capable of advancing the interests of the line immensely. Still, we think it will be as well to keep in the background—profit by his services, but not have his name in the prospectus. Even *we* think him queer,” added Gammon, candidly, “but a most able, clever, long-headed fellow. The capital proposed is £2,500,000, and 100,000 shares of £25 each, deposit £2 12s. 6d. per share; on such a line as this will people eat us up for them—even now they are beginning,” pointing to the heap of letters. “We have some substantial names—very substantial names;” producing a long list in manuscript. “Here’s a man, the first I hit upon—stinks of money. I should say that man can’t be worth less than half a

million. Here's another ; this fellow holds an appointment under Government that brings in £20,000 a-year. This man, now, is in one of the first firms in the city—sugar-bakers—got a splendid place in Surrey. This is an old commissary ; feathered his nest well during the war, a sound good man. I can't say much for this Baronet, who, between ourselves, has not, I suppose, a hundred a-year ; but here's another, a most influential man in Leicestershire, got a house like a palace, and the best part of three parishes. If any of your friends would like to join us, why I have no doubt it could be managed—in fact, I think I can pledge myself to it. Rank is a great thing : *we* of course don't think so much of it, but rich old ladies are caught by a title. Couldn't you get Sir William to come in, or Sir John ? These old generals, with regiments, look well in a prospectus ; and you know the member for—I forget the name of that Irish county, a young man I see you walking with, he'd be just the man for us ; they're people of great interest—and let me see, the Baronet you go

to shoot with in Norfolk, that would be a capital name. And this is not a bad way of returning any little obligation you may have received from them, for the directors will make a good thing of it directly the thing comes out. We shall be at two or three pounds premium at once, and you can realize that upon your two or three hundred shares: but when the line begins to work, why, the profits will be something enormous. Look at the Birmingham line, why the shares are at a hundred and twenty premium."

"I wonder, as one of the promoters is a lawyer, that he did not make himself solicitor to the line."

"Why, the fact is, for the reason I gave you, it wouldn't have done. In these things people look to a respectable house. He knew there might be a want of confidence in him—in the city where he's known; so he came to us. Besides, he hasn't capital. You can't ask your committee for money at first; it would throw a damp upon the thing. Now, we don't mind advancing five hundred or one



thousand pounds, because there's a certainty of its coming back immediately: the instant the thing is advertised, and the shares ready to distribute, we shall get in a couple of hundred thousand pounds, as a matter of certainty—safe to do it! There's the Intermediate Kent, that we have something to do with; and the Dunkirk and Cadiz, with a tunnel under the Pyrenees, capital forty millions—there's a gash across two countries! They are ready to tear us to pieces for them. The resources of this country, my dear Sir, are such as nobody could conceive, who was not extensively mixed up in business.”

Now, I have no pretensions to the character of a saint, and quite as little to that of a Pharisee. I *am* as other men are; not insensible to the value of a few hundred pounds, provided the same may be acquired by any means recognised as honest, and without any compromise of character: and how could I be compromised by doing that which three-fourths of the people of England were actually busied in at that moment? Why, did not bishops

traffic in shares, to acquire the means of building schools; and did not one of the most sagacious and honourable men—a public character of vast wealth and influence, ostentatiously, with a silver spade, turn up the first sod of a railway, in the result almost as abortive as ours? Were not nine-tenths of the whole population of the three kingdoms prostrate—or ready to fall prostrate—before the Railway King, for the smallest possible hint that should guide them in their speculations?

I remember how people would come half-frantic into the city, and give orders to buy certain shares at yesterday's prices.

"They are up," would be the broker's answer, "five pounds. Hudson has joined the line!" He knew it well; but came too late.

A little still I strove, and then—consented.

"That's right," said Mr. Gammon. "By the bye, I don't think you ever saw our offices—would you like to look over the house?" He was fearful I should relapse.

As a house of business—or apparent business

—it was absolute perfection. The ground-floor, second-floor, third-floor, teemed with clerks—thirty I should think at least—and the scratching of pens was almost the only sound heard. Having some little experience of the charge, per folio, for such manuscripts, I could not help speculating upon the amazing amount of book debts that were daily, and even hourly run up; and the six and eight-penny letters that were being tossed off in a few seconds. Nothing could exceed the convenience: tubes extended from the offices of the partners, to every corner of the building; and they could carry on a conversation, or give orders to any one in the house, with scarcely the trouble of rising off their chairs.

At three o'clock we hurried into Holborn, and took a cab to Moorgate Street, stopping at a large and apparently new house.

“This is mine,” said Mr. Gammon; “what do you think of it?”

“Yours!”

“Yes; a little speculation of mine. I pay a hundred a-year for it, and let it out in offices

to different companies, for three. We'll look over it, if you like. This is the Aerial Transit Company, provisionally registered; scientific men think something of it, but they have not flown their first balloon yet: still I believe their shares go off respectably. Then here's the Gas condensing Company, for condensing gas into a liquid, and enclosing it in copper balls, for the convenience of carriage. It is meant for the use of the other company principally, and of course for ballooning in general—saves all the time of inflation on the road. For instance: the company's first stage is Paris; to get down they let off a part of their gas, and then when the passengers are landed and others taken up, they open a ball, the gas at once expands, the balloon is filled, and away they go to Marseilles, Vienna, Constantinople, or wherever they are bound; and do the same every stage. Ingenious, isn't it?"

We soon came to a noble mahogany door, over which appeared the words, "Direct Bullocksmithy and Bognor Railway (no admittance

except on business).” Passing through a small apartment in which a clerk was at work, we entered a spacious room, with a long new mahogany table down its centre, and surrounded by very easy chairs of a dining-room pattern. The room was newly and handsomely carpetted, and every article of furniture was new and clean. The table was covered with plans, maps, and other papers, and a plentiful allowance of inkstands and blotting-books. At the table sat the secretary; a pursy, pompous and overdressed gentleman, one of the directors; and the two promoters, one of whom, the able attorney of indifferent reputation, rose and cordially grasped Mr. Gammon by the hand, which he responded to by an equally hearty pressure, and a shower of smiles: one would have thought them the very best friends in the world. I was also introduced to this gentleman, Mr. Nicas, who shook me warmly by the hand also, and we took our seats beside him.

As this is a remarkable character, he merits a short description. Mr. Nicas was a gentleman of middle age, an ample rotundity of

figure, and a jovial, high-complexioned face. He looked a man whom no care could touch, and no anxiety harass. Everything about him was smooth, and handsome, and sound and respectable. Not a flaw could be discovered in any of his appointments. His face and hands were of scrupulous cleanliness, and his fingers adorned with a plain massive ring or two. His neckcloth and frilled shirt were like the driven snow, contrasting admirably with the shining Saxony black of his coat, waistcoat, and trousers: nor was the polish or the make of his boots unworthy of the general getting-up of his person. In his hand he had a plain gold double eye-glass, and from beneath his waistcoat there dangled low down a bunch of plain polished seals, suspended by a plain massive chain. He had no watch-guard, which, indeed, would in him have been out of character. He seemed to offer a handle to the merest tyro of a pickpocket, as much as to say: "if you want a chronometer, why here is one; a trifle of fifty guineas is nothing to me, I have a mine of chronometers about me!" The whole appear-

ance of the man betokened indulgence, and the amplest means of gratifying that propensity ; but, in the midst of all, you saw an uncommon depth in his eye. Of all the men I ever met, he seemed the best calculated to walk through an Act of Parliament—nay, to drive a coach and six, laden inside and out with passengers, through a chink imperceptible to other eyes. He had in him a depth of humbug unattainable by other mortals ; a show of power, and a rich rosy relish of success. He seemed to be in a perpetual quiet chuckle at some “do ;” and if ever you heard of anything very eminently successful in the way of fraud or cozenage, you involuntarily smiled when you thought of how Nicas would have enjoyed it.

Whether it was that Mr. Nicas saw a ray of penetration pass over my face, I can’t tell ; but I imagine that he thought a better confirming of my new-made resolution would not be amiss ; so whispering to a clerk, there appeared almost on the instant a decanter of sherry and a plate of sandwiches, of which he blandly hastened to offer me a share. This at once brought us

all into agreeable communion ; the secretary congratulated me on joining the line ; the other promoter, a man who wasted himself in the anxious devising of impracticable schemes, came forward and shook me by the hand as a brother chip ; and even the over-dressed old commissary, Mr. Pompus, for it proved to be he, relaxed in his ill-humour after a glass of wine. This fellow hated a new-comer, for he fancied that there would be less of the spoil for himself.

Though Gammon had expatiated with some success upon the advantages of the new line, yet he fell into weakness before the oily eloquence of Nicas. It seemed as if all the virtues of all the other lines in the kingdom were concentrated upon the Direct Bullocksmithy and Bognor Atmospheric. Bognor itself was suddenly to become a marine metropolis, fed by streams of visitors from the Northern and Midland Counties by means of our railway. The coal brought down was to be stored in vast warehouses, and Shoreham harbour at once shut up. As Nicas was proceeding with his descriptions, I happened to overlook a prospectus



which lay before him, and there, to my unbounded astonishment, I saw my own name duly set forth as one of the provisional committee, it having been printed before I ever heard or dreamt of the line!

Here the lieutenant-promoter came forward. He had walked the line leisurely, as nearly as possible by compass, taken an eye-sketch of the levels, collected specimens of the soil, and especially of the rocks, and predicted a time not far distant when the clay of the weald would be converted into a friable, easy mould under the influence of the lime which we should bring upon it.

There was to be a general meeting of the directors the next day, and I was requested particularly to attend, and, if possible, to bring a friend with me.

"It's merely to open proceedings," whispered Mr. Nicas, "to elect a chairman, and then we shall choose our managing committee afterwards."

Accordingly the next day at the appointed hour, the place was crammed. Mr. Pompus,

the commissary, hastened to propose a valued friend, whom he had known for forty years, a man he was proud to recommend to their notice: a man well known in the city, conversant with business, and not only as a most useful public servant, but a gentleman of unblemished character. He would no longer detain the meeting, but beg to propose Mr. Bobbinet as a fit and proper person to fill the responsible situation of chairman of the Direct Bullock-smithy and Bognor Atmospheric Railway.

The motion was hastily seconded by a worthy baronet, who rather dreaded being proposed himself, and no other name being mentioned, the nomination took place, and old Bobbinet assumed the chair.

The chairman then in a set speech of much innocence, explained the nature of the undertaking, drew attention to the advantages we should confer upon the country generally through which we passed; and after the two influential towns which formed the termini of our line, how they would undoubtedly start into life and vigour at the Promethean touch of

our stoker; and ages yet unborn would have to revere, not only the memories of the two intelligent men who had happily conceived the project, but that of the assembled gentlemen who, he doubted not, would as happily carry it out. And here he sat down amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the meeting.

The lieutenant then came forward with his soils and his rocks, his probable gradients, cuttings and tunnels; dwelling, however, upon the extreme facility of the engineering, and the general cheapness of land we should pass through, and delivered up all further description of its advantages to his colleague in the happy origination of the project.

Nicas rose next, in act more graceful than the lieutenant, and uniting in himself to something of the eloquence of Belial a large share of that worthy's power to make the worse appear the better reason, and the "Atlantean shoulders" which characterised another of the ancient promoters of a line, even more celebrated than Bullocksmithy and Bognor. But there was no attempt at eloquence—no puff, no flourish, no

effort ; the advantages of the line he took as a matter of course. He spoke as one plain man of business to another. There could be no doubt of the facts ; they were all obvious to the merest child. It was a good thing : he said so. He threw his weight into it. It was a good thing ; and, as men of business, they must see it was a good thing. But when he concluded his speech, it was then that his eloquence began. He knew there would be no other speeches, so timed it that the sherry and sandwiches should appear the moment he sat down. Of course, every one was on his legs. Then it was that Nicas strutted about, and drank wine with every man in the room, handed him another sandwich, nudged him in the ribs, or shot a sentence into his ear by the back in his hand. A wink was enough for some, others he took aside. What he said was in confidence and friendship ; they had a good thing in hand ; let them keep their own counsel : it was safe to take. Any man who wanted to make a few thousand pounds, now was his time.

The meeting shut up in measureless content ;

and I have no doubt there were few there who did not prevail upon their friends and neighbours to apply for shares in so promising a scheme.

Happening to stroll down to the office the next day with a friend, I found some eight or ten of the directors assembled, including the chairman, the vice-chairman, and the influential Mr. Pompus the Commissary. I observed that we were looked upon with extreme disgust, but this rather caused us to stay; when, behold! we found that the chairman had called a meeting, which nobody ever heard of, for the purpose of choosing a managing committee, in which only himself and his particular friends were to take part; and we had just intruded ourselves upon this snug little party, who, as we came before they broke up, could do no less than elect us of their body. A stormy meeting ensued of the excluded, but the election was somehow considered valid, and the rejected went away in disgust.

It was curious to see the mixture of people that came together upon the committees of

those railways. Peers and commoners—men of fashion and men of business—incongruities which by no accident, it would have seemed, could be brought into contact, still less to sit day after day at the same board, engaged in the same occupation—that of running a double line of rails between places that wanted no communication, and which, in spite of all the eloquence of Nicas, I could never entirely bring myself to believe in; but to breathe such a doubt before our committee was to draw a hornet's nest upon the doubter. The question is, did anybody, whether directors or applicants for shares, or allottees, hazard their money on the undertaking, except as they would have risked it on a hazard-table?—differing only in this, that instead of any of the customary mains, they called it “The Direct Bullocksmithy and Bognor.” I like to strip humbug of its cloak, though it be to my own exposure.

Now that the scales have fallen from my eyes, I look back with wonder, mixed with no slight degree of ridicule, at the earnest nature of our proceedings. How we dragged in all

the friends we could to partake in the benefits of the great undertaking : how we put a little army of surveyors to stick up poles with small red flags upon them for a hundred and twenty miles : how our officials were maltreated, dogs set at them, testy old gentlemen, with thick sticks, waited for them behind hedges, and dangerous bulls let loose upon their path : how odd times and seasons had to be chosen : how retired country gentlemen discovered to their extreme disgust, that the new line had been surveyed, the levels taken, and their park, garden, choicest preserves were all mapped and disposed of long before they rose in the morning, and the future line destined to pass close under their bed-room window, if not through the house itself.

Sometimes we were defeated, but not often. Keepers were stationed round the domain, and the engineer kept at bay. Many elderly ladies were irate at the purposed destruction of their flower-gardens, or the model dairy. For their especial benefit we hired a Dutchman, speaking no language but his own, caught somewhere in

Holland by our agent for engineers, who had no means of questioning him as to his capability, but seized upon him from the mere fact of his having a dumpy level in his hand. How we kept a smooth-tongued gentleman in hand, always ready to slip in a chaise and four to any point of unusual obstruction; and truth to say, such is the irresistible force of eloquence, taking self-interest for its theme, that he rarely failed to convince the good gentleman or lady how much better it would be to submit to the trifling inconvenience of the line, with the certainty of doubling the value of all the property upon it.

And what tearing there was from one part of the town to another, especially the last day of registration, when all the papers were bound to be in, or we lost a year. I forget how many cabs were required on the average to convey a clerk from Lincoln's Inn or Westminster. The orders were to gallop on till a stoppage occurred, then to jump out and run on to a clear part of the street; on by the first cab that could be seized till another stoppage, and so on.



What applicants we had for shares ; people the most unlikely. Elderly ladies in remote parts of the country, clergymen innumerable, and it was even whispered judges and bishops, and married ladies of all but the very highest rank, acting through their brokers or agents. In the dingy offices of the broker you jostled half the peerage. Cautious elderly maidens came purposely from the country, to make their quiet little speculation themselves, and sat hours in the broker's office, before they could make up their minds what line to invest in. The sagacious broker let them alone—they were generally two together—satisfied that a purchase would be made, but very cautious of giving an opinion. The curious, antique bonnets and shawls, reserved for years for some such great occasion as this, were really an interesting study of bygone fashions.

As the progress of the lines towards getting their bills got on, the interest in them increased. There was a system of telegraph by flags going on upon all the bridges. Upon any new fea-

ture coming out before the parliamentary committee, a messenger retained for the purpose, and there were plenty of them, rushed with a slip of paper inscribed "blue, white, red, vertical," or "yellow, green, horizontal," to a man holding a whole faggot of flags on Westminster Bridge. The required colours, on being displayed, were instantly repeated on all the bridges down to London bridge, when a man, ready seated in a cab, received a paper on which was written the colours and their order of display, with which he posted to the directors sitting in the office ready to act upon the information. Private individuals also established telegraphs from the same quarter, which regulated their transactions on the Exchange. The following is the clever readiness of a barrister—at least so goes the story by another of that calling, professing to receive it from his own lips:

He was senior in the cause of a line struggling with a rival which should get the bill. While prosy witnesses were giving their testimony, he carefully looked through the bill of the company which he advocated, and made the

discovery that the conditions required had not been complied with, that the bill would consequently be lost for that year, if not for ever, and that consequently the instant such news arrived on Change, the shares of the company would fall.

Quickly whispering to his junior that he was going out for a few minutes, and leaving the case in his hands, he left the committee-room, slipped off his cloak and gown, threw himself into a cab with the fastest horse in Palace Yard, and drove at the best pace to his broker's at the Stock Exchange.

“ Sell me out two thousand shares in the Stoke Pogis and Saltash Railway—in fact, as many shares as you can—quick !”

Somewhere about two thousand five hundred shares were disposed of in small lots not to create alarm, at an average price of £3 premium per share. The lawyer then returned in all haste to his duties, made the best fight he could for the line. In the meantime, the learned gentlemen on the other side, had glanced over it, discovered the flaw, pointed it out to the committee, and the bill was lost.

Directly the news reached the Stock Exchange, the Stoke Pogis and Saltash Railway shares went at one jump from £3 premium to par, at which latter price our barrister purchased 2,500 shares, to replace those he had sold on the previous day at the premium, realizing, of course, the difference, amounting to about £7,500, less brokerage and cab-hire. When he sold out, he did not possess a single share in the Stoke Pogis and Saltash line—not one; but he knew perfectly well that it made no difference to him whether he sold first and purchased after; on the contrary, it was all one transaction at the settling-day; and if he sold the shares for three pounds each more than he gave for them, it was a clear case of gain to him. This is called a Bear bargain.

At length came a turn of the tide. Shares were not quite so lively, even the leading lines went down a trifle, the others more. The 'Times,' who generally goes with the stream, began to murmur more loudly. People took to hedge, and get rid of their doubtful scrip, and that caused a deeper depression still. The

Bank raised its rate of interest, and that caused a further flatness. At last the panic fairly set in: down went everything—down, down, down. Reams of scrip were offered, and no bidders—down, down, down—a hideous, overwhelming rout and ruin of scraps of paper, a month before worth hundreds of millions, now little better than old rags. Not only were the Stags scattered, but speculators of all kinds—good, bad and indifferent; while the ‘Times’ and its thunders

“ . . . . hung on their broken rear  
Exulting, and pursued them through the deep.”

This crisis happened at the unhappy moment when the Direct Bullocksmithy and Bognor was issuing its scrip; but the country had been scared, and applications came in slowly, and soon ceased altogether. We had spent about twelve thousand pounds in sticking up our red flags, and getting our sections of the country made, law expenses, travelling expenses, &c., while we received about seven

thousand to pay it. I must however say that the committee never touched one farthing for themselves, directly or indirectly.

I had nearly forgotten to mention a committee within the managing committee, and independent of it. Taking me one day aside, Mr. Pompus asked if I should object to belong to the "select committee?" To my question as to its duties, I could get only the answer, that it was to advance the interests of the line. The chairman was to be one, the vice-chairman another, and I the third. Pompus really could not tell the duties, or even guess them; couldn't attend to it himself; believed every thing would be very easy; and then took me to my colleagues as a fit and proper person to make the third member of this very select society. Day by day we met together; but from the moment of our appointment, till the whole thing broke up, we never did one single thing; nor should I to this day have been aware of our particular duties, but for meeting accidentally in an omnibus a twelvemonth after our projector-lieutenant.

“That line, Sir,” said he, with his usual enthusiasm, “would have answered, and answered well, if the chairman had not been an old woman, and the select committee had properly rigged it.”

“Rigged it?”

“Yes, that was their only duty—gone to every broker in London constantly to order them to buy up shares which they knew were not to be got—offered any money for Bullocksmithy’s and Bognors—cried it up, puffed it up, rigged it; in short, that was the only use they were of! All this my friend Pompus well knew, but being a man of standing, he preferred to do such things by deputy. He had got his little venture of chesnuts on the fire, and he wanted a friendly catspaw to turn them, and cook them, and bring them forward till they were fit to remove altogether. I shall never forget how people were taken in, whom one would never have supposed likely to dabble in shares, and of whom the fact never would have been known, but that they could not contain their vexation. One day I met a venerable general-officer, whom

I had known many years, coming in a state of, for him, wild excitement, a thing so unusual that I could not help asking what was the matter. ‘My dear fellow,’ cried he, wringing his hands, ‘the South Midlands that I bought at nine premium are at par, and the Caledonians are nowhere. What a consummate ass I have been! Ah! if I had only had the pluck to be a Bear!’”

This general downfall of scrip and shares took place in November, and during the winter the public remained stunned and stupified in the ruins. It is needless to recall the memory of these heavy times: how promoters and Stags vanished, no one knew whither; how people walked about with their pockets full of writs, and showed them in handfulls to their friends; how many an honest man was ruined—many a family crippled. The sagacious annuitant, too cautious or too virtuous to be drawn into the whirlpool, will here very naturally exclaim, “serve them right.”

In the extreme hurry of the scene, Gammon bolted, forgetting in his confusion to pay a



sum of money he owed me. Subsequently he availed himself of the leniency of the law to wipe off a trifle of some £50,000 of his liabilities in the Insolvent Debtors Court. Our chairman took the waters for a protracted period, with reported advantage, and the gentleman with the pecuniary smell, carried his perfume into lands so remote, that the beagles of the law found it impossible to puzzle it out. The secretary remained at his post having nothing to lose, but the rest were nowhere.

It may not be amiss in their place, to trace the progress of these unfortunate undertakings, till they are consigned to that hopeless limbo created by the Joint Stock Companies winding-up act. For some four years the directors and collectors were left to fight their own battles without the law to guide them, the ruling of one judge being overruled by another, and the gainer of a cause to-day, finding himself forced into a new trial, with the odds against him to-morrow. When all concerned (except the lawyers) had been well nigh ruined, a final

screw is put upon the managing committee which bids fair in time to squeeze them dry. The Master in Chancery degrades that each is to be mulcted in a certain fixed sum, say £1,000, and a gentleman styled an official manager, is installed permanently in the concern, with a view to carry out the master's orders; and the expenses of working this machinery, have for the last three years amounted to about £100 a-year to each managing director, in addition of course, to the £1,000 or so first ordered to be paid up, but which nobody, as far as I can see, has either paid or intends to pay. As the managing directors die, or become bankrupt, their shares are divided amongst the others, and this terrific tontine may be presumed to continue till all the liabilities settle on the devoted head of the last man.

In the meantime, I sincerely hope that the manager is taken care of: does he work gratuitously, or help himself to any moderate salary of £1,000 or £1,500 a-year out of the paid-up capital? After all, there is something

satisfactory in the prompt decision of a Turkish Cadi, as compared to this last result of our wisdom ; and few persons situated as are our unfortunate committee, would hesitate to choose such a tribunal in preference to ours—the risk of the bastinado notwithstanding.

Some years having passed since my last visit to my friends in Sussex, I determined to follow the general example, and escape to the hospitable house of my literal friend Strong, and his no less literal and earnest wife. Though our correspondence had not been of a very hot or constant kind, it had never wholly discontinued, and I was kept pretty well aware of my friends' proceedings, though totally in the dark as to the rest of the family.

It is in revisiting old friends that we find imagination has stood still with us, for the reality invariably outstrips any conceptions we may have formed of the changes brought about by lapse of time ; they look older than what we have pictured them. Not only was this the case with my excellent friends, but they had assumed a bulk which spoke plainly

enough of content and peace of mind. They knew nothing of railways, and though seated within good hearing distance of our anticipated whistles and screams, they had actually never heard of that important line the 'Direct Bullocksmith and Bognor.' It was difficult for even friendship to shield from contempt so lamentable an instance of insensibility.

My friend was rapidly lapsing into a patriarch, and sinking deeper and deeper among the cushions of domestic bliss. He had got to that stage when a man passes his evenings in slippers; and it required but little foresight to predict that a dressing-gown, if not a night-cap, will eventually follow. In all these indulgences he was upheld by his wife, whose earnest insight in everything was perfect, but most so in all which concerned her husband's comfort: even the children were brought up to it from their cradle. There was a terrific scramble when any new comfort was wanting, the slippers produced little less than an insurrection, for they were all too earnest not to join in; even the fat baby who could barely walk,

kept steadily hoisting himself up-stairs upon his knees and elbows, long after the rest had come down, and never failed after a time, to produce a something which he called a "slippa."

My own position in the family was a singular one. That from the mere utterance of a thoughtless joke, I should be thought to have given advice which brought about the happiest of marriages; and without the slightest intention of doing so, should have brought together two people so singularly formed for each other, and of a degree of simplicity which would have rendered them unsuitable to any other: that I should unwittingly have done this, and been revered as the benefactor of the family, made me, I confess, feel something of a conscious imposition in the presence of my friends. If I had disclosed the truth, I might, perhaps, have been considered as verging upon a mild form of lunacy, but should most assuredly have gained no credit for my candour.

Strange changes had taken place in the other part of the family. Mrs. Weggs had discon-

tinued for several years to make an annual addition to her family, an omission sadly felt by her husband, to whom a succession of babies had grown into a habit. Lizzy—*my* Lizzy, as she ought to have been, though from some unaccountable cause the courtship never came off—was happily married, and settled in a farm at the foot of the Downs. But the most surprising event was the recovery—almost the resuscitation—of the invalid Mary.

For many years, almost, indeed, from her birth, Mrs. Weggs had made up her mind to bury Mary. She was always spoken of, with reference to that sad event, usually wrapped up under the phraseology of anything happening to her!

“I shall bury that poor girl,” she would say to her large circle of intimate friends; “it’s a sad thing for a mother to contemplate, but God’s will be done! She has enjoyed nothing but bad health from her cradle.” Mrs. Weggs came even more straight to the point. “When poor Mary drops, you know, my dears, we can remove Ethelfrida into her room, and that will

give the children the space of her bed." Nevertheless, this blighted fruit still hung upon the branch, did not "drop," as expected; neither did anything particular "happen," in reference to her, except the occasional change of her medicine.

At this particular juncture, Mr. Wizen, the chemist, was gathered to his fathers, and was succeeded in his house and business by his son, a youth who had passed not without credit through his professional studies, and now undertook to fill the post lately occupied by his respectable parent. Though educated to a higher branch of the medical profession, he had the good sense to retain the more humble part, which gets a proverbial eleven pence out of every shilling—for a time at least, till he felt if the public pulse beat to his higher aspirations.

It happened upon an eventful day, that Miss Mary was constrained to fetch her own medicine from the young chemist's shop. She had become a confirmed invalid. The nerves had taken up the general feebleness; her features became twitchy, her eyes fixed; she nursed the

expectation of dropping, and even became morbidly sensitive as to where she should lie. With feeble steps she tottered into the chemist's shop.

"Anything you like to order, ma'am," said Mr. Wizen, in answer to her inquiry, "I shall, of course be happy to make up for you ; but if you would permit me, I think I could suggest something more suitable."

"Ah, Mr. Charles, I shall not trouble you much longer."

"Most happy should I be," said the chemist, "if I could see you dispense with these medicines altogether. I don't despair of it, believe me."

Poor Mary shook her head. "My only thought now is where my grave is to be ; I dread a churchyard.

" ' Mine be some breezy hill beside the Down,

Where a green grassy turf is all I crave ;

With here and there a violet bestrown,

And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my  
grave.' "

"Pooh, nonsense, Miss Weggs," said the



brisk chemist; "taraxacum's better than that. Place confidence in me, and I think I can bring you round. I do indeed. It would be hard, indeed," said Mr. Wizen, looking round with some triumph upon his array of labelled bottles and drawers, like an army reposing in cantonments, while his whole front along the counter was covered and masked by a powerful light division, ready equipped for immediate operations, "it would be hard, indeed, if something could not be found to suit your case. Allow me," said the chemist, in his most emollient manner, "to have a little talk with you; it may be of advantage."

After much persuasion, Miss Mary allowed herself to be taken into the back parlour, where a rather lengthened consultation took place; and when she left the shop it may be doubted whether some distant gleams had not dawned upon her mind that life might have, even for her, something better than the choice of a churchyard.

With despairing acquiescence and shaking heads, Mr. and Mrs. Weggs consented to Mr.

Wizen's taking the case of their daughter in hand. This resolution caused some wonder in the household. Maria prophesied a rapid completion to the case in the hands of so young a practitioner ; and the numerous circle of friends, while they shook their heads and exclaimed, " Well, we shall see," continued to leave an opening for any prophecy which might be justified by subsequent events.

Meantime Mr. Wizen braced himself up to the task he had taken in hand. It was his first patient, and all eyes were upon him. He knew that the large circle of friends were saying of him that he was a clever young man, no doubt, but if he brought round Mary Weggs, he was cleverer than they took him for. He began by throwing the pill-boxes out of the window, laid an embargo even upon his own drugs, trusted to the mildest remedies, to air, gentle exercise, and diet ; and coming up to the house so often to see how the patient got on, may be said principally to have prescribed himself. It is needless to say how the prescription answered ; how Mary put on health and bloom, to the infinite

surprise of every one ; how the large circle of friends “knew how it would be from the first—of course, poor creature, she was dosed to death, nearly, I have often said so ;” how Mr. Wizen’s fame spread ; how gratitude paved the way for a softer feeling in the breast of the recovered invalid ; how Mrs. Weggs toiled round the large circle of friends to announce a most important coming event ; how it eventually came off with all the honours, and how Mr. Wizen triumphantly fulfilled his promise as regarded the rotundity before the end of the year.

I have a peculiar love for Sussex ; partly from its being the scene where I was first launched upon the world, partly from its peculiar, and, in my eyes, beautiful scenery, its primitive inhabitants, and geological features. In the frocked and leather-legged peasants of the Weald, we see the most perfect type which England can show of our Saxon ancestors, as the country, with its network of “schaws” enclosing every field, is the nearest approach to the old primeval forest. Altogether are they more backward than any other portion of this

stirring country : in their language, manners, dress, agriculture, buildings—above all, in their dogged obstinacy. In no other part are the Saxon blue eyes and fair hair so universal ; and their cross-roads could scarcely have been worse in the times of the Heptarchy.

What pleasant days I have passed upon the swelling sides of those old Downs, carved with entrenchments of some long-forgotten people, and looking down into the close little villages below, like baby-houses built up in moss. And not always unaccompanied by certain little prattlers from a farm-house below, the property of the quondam Lizzy Weggs, down whose chimney we could, if so minded, have tossed the pieces of chalk which cropped out from the smooth turf we sat on.

Not a movement in the little homestead was lost upon us. Mamma's saunter in the garden was hailed with tiny screams of delight ; we knew exactly what Jack and Tom were about as they moved across the yard ; and when an outcry came from the hen-coops, we were certain we saw the sparrow-hawk gliding round

the old beech-trees, or the wind-hover hanging above the close. Beyond the village, the wood seemed almost continuous, broken here and there by some hoary-red farm-house, with its quaint heavy chimneys placed angularly to each other, or some tiny church, with its short, white towers, capped with an extinguisher of wood. In the middle distance sat the hazy old city, cosily smoking his many pipes among the trees, and far beyond that, just where the shining sea turned up a silver line upon the beach, was the paradise of Uncle Strong, and even the summer-house, where steady Pegg was wont to sit and think.

I know of nothing more delightful than a country walk, with intelligent, talking children; and not the less so for the curious habit they have of dragging the Greeks and Romans neck and heels into the conversation, putting the most searching questions about Flaminius; thinking Fabius, in their hearts, a slow fellow, and believing most devoutly that the Duke of Wellington rode foremost into battle, and laid

about him like Richard Cœur de Lion, or Charles the Twelfth.

From these tranquil pleasures I was summoned to London, on a matter of the deepest importance—such vital importance indeed, that the worthy legal gentleman who had the task of communicating it, hemmed for at least two minutes before he could safely deliver himself of the disastrous news.

“Your uncle never married, I think?” said he at length, making a great effort.

“Not that I am aware of.”

“Ah! what a cursed custom it is!”

“Why, my dear Sir, I thought you were the happiest of all the Benedicts!”

“True, most true. A damnable law; because no man can tell what he may do when he’s drunk.”

“For that reason, I suppose, the ceremony is ordered to take place before noon as a protection to all but the very fast men who drink ale and brandy at breakfast.”

“My dear Sir, they can do it at any time;

a man comes home a little elevated, and sees Betsy looking prettier than he ever thought her before. ‘Betty,’ he says, ‘you are my wife!’ ‘Oh dear me, Sir, what are you thinking of! Do come here, cook, and hear what master says; he says I’m his wife.’

“‘And so I do,’ says the stupid idiot half drunk, ‘and I call you, cook, to witness it!’ That man’s married, Sir, to all intents and purposes, and the issue of that marriage, many or few, are his lawfully begotten children. That’s in Scotland.”

There was something in this conversation that grated rather harshly upon my feelings—I hardly knew why. My uncle, late possessor of the property I held was a Scotchman: surely the lawyer could not allude to him in the little domestic episode he had imagined?

“The fact is,” said the man of law after a pause, and clearing his throat, “I had a woman here yesterday who came with a foolish story of having been married in a way something like this to your uncle; but I can’t believe it: I really can’t believe it. At any rate the proof

lies with her, and after all these years it will be no easy matter to establish it. She has got a son, confound her—at least so she says. She lived only a week with your uncle, who did not like her on second thoughts, and gave her a sum of money to go to America, where she has been ever since; but seeing his death in some Scotch paper—this facility of sending papers about does a deal of harm depend upon it—why she packed up her traps and came back to Scotland, and now she's in London. But, I think, we can drive her out of the field—supposing the story true, you know, which is far from proved. I'd give a trifle if the cook was dead, but she says she's alive and ready to come forward; but this may be another link in the chain of lies. We have possession remember, and that, as you know, is nine points of the law. We shall bother her in Chancery. Where do you think she can find money to file her bill?—even at the very worst we can wear her out in Chancery, and then bury her cheap, and her son too.”

Notwithstanding the lawyer's clumsy attempts



at comfort, I felt that the game was lost. If such were really the law of the land, and the witnesses were alive; doubtless also others in the neighbourhood would come forward with collateral evidences—why the decision must go against me. I might make a desperate fight through the Court, and avail myself of all the quibbles and delays of that grand scheme of impositions, but sooner or later I must disgorge my prey, after years of harassing trouble and frightful anxiety, so I made up my mind at once.

“Let us see this woman to-morrow, and her witness too; employ a sharp fellow to collect all the evidence against us; lay the case before eminent counsel here and in Scotland, and if the opinions are unfavourable, I shall hand over the property to Betty and have done with it.”

“But, my dear Sir, you surely will stipulate for an annuity, even if it comes to the worst. Consider how we can work her for seven—ten—aye, perhaps twenty years—why it must break her heart in half the time. Besides,

you can compromise. A few thousand pounds to one who perhaps never had a hundred at any one time, will send her back to America; and the boy's just of age, so we can get a proper instrument signed, giving up all claim upon the property. She doesn't seem to know the amount of ready money there was, but somebody I am afraid will put her up to that. We positively must show a front, and it will be hard indeed, if we can't beat an old woman and a silly boy at one-and-twenty."

Anything more entirely flat than the aspect of the London Streets on that afternoon, I cannot conceive. The toiling crowds were a disgusting bore to me as I walked homewards; the giggling of country parties hurrying into the theatres, or admiring the shop-windows, was an impertinent and senseless merriment; the roar of the omnibusses was bewildering, but most annoying of all were the cordial greetings of my dear friends at the Club, who, in a few weeks more, perhaps, would be anxiously scanning the clouds when they met me, and hardly think themselves safe on the

other side of the street. As for my friends in Baker Street, I could easily fancy the eagerness with which they would call upon Betty, should she take possession of my villa at Brompton. The only person I softened to was the street-sweeper, who really thought I was joking when I inquired the amount of "coming in" he would expect should I decide upon succeeding him in his business.

Meantime, while the necessary steps were being taken, I shut myself up in my house and saw nobody. The servants were amazed and distantly hinted at a medical man, little imagining that for a considerable portion of my retirement, I had thought of prescribing for myself in this wise :

R. Vini Xerici 3ij,

Acid : Hydrocyanici 3ij.

Misce. Fiat haustus, hora somni sumendus.

In due time the evidence was collected. The cook was identified as the real witness to the marriage, a boy who lived in the house distinctly remembered Betty as his mistress, and

the neighbours recollected the event. The legal gentlemen decided against me, all but one, who thought the evidence might be successfully set aside—probably in the expectation that he was to do it. In fact, it was a hopeless case, and I prepared to give up with a good grace what the law would certainly not have allowed me to keep. The lawyer seriously proposed to me to marry Betty, and so become a sort of hanger-on upon the property, which was, however, in my eyes, too fatal a proposition to be entertained.

It may seem a strange thing, to many no doubt incredible, that I should have felt exceedingly cheerful when I found myself finally and irrevocably stripped of every farthing I had in the world, for before I came into possession of my rents, I had laid out my own little capital in the various purchases—not to say extravagancies—which I thought justifiable on the immediate and certain prospect of such a fortune; not to mention a loan to my honourable friend, which had probably been worked out in a martingale at Homburg, so

that when my furniture was sold, I found myself in possession of about enough to pay off my current debts, and leave a residue which, under late circumstances, I might have spent in a fortnight.

After all, there is a sort of savage pleasure in feeling that you are without a penny and without a friend—not, perhaps, to the man who either sits down and whines over his destitution, or torments his acquaintance to do something for him. It was never till this misfortune came upon me, that I felt how grievous a system is that of the British military service. In all other armies a soldier is a soldier for life; he may retire, but is still eligible for employment; he can no more throw off his military character than can a physician or an attorney cast off his medical or legal attributes; or at least each can resume them again if they do.

The unemployed military man comes nearer to the state of a fish out of water than any other professional person can attain to. He has been accustomed to just so much employment as

to make him idle, by depriving him of any habit of persistent industry which he may have possessed ; his time is frittered away in small, unimportant, irksome, and tedious responsibilities.

The iron doors of the military service being then closed, it remained only for me to make the discovery as to what virtue I might have in me available for the procuring of beef and mutton in some limited quantity, sufficient to keep me free of the workhouse, or, what would be still worse, the sympathizing assistance of my friends. A man under such circumstances naturally calls an inspection of his necessities, physical and mental, hunting dimly amongst them for the beef-and-bread winner upon which he may safely calculate for maintenance.

Slowly sauntering from the Bank to Charing Cross, he surveys with something like awe the myriads who pass him, and asks again and again : "What do they most want ?" The answer must be, "Health, money, and the gratification of their vanity and curiosity." I felt myself not unable to minister to two of these wants. During the whole period of

my service, I had never neglected the medical part of my education, nor lost an opportunity of refreshing my recollection of it.

Practice, it is true, is coy, and not readily moved within the clutch of a starving man ; but there are reviews, miscellanies, newspapers, and other periodicals having more or less liberal editors, who for a good article will assuredly give a good price. So I sat doggedly to work, the mornings in hard, severe study, the evenings in such literary cookery as I deemed most suitable to the prevailing taste.

And here let me pause to notice what is the most real and luxurious feeling of content which the world can offer—a sense of having that in you, which, with diligence, suffices for independent existence. This is the only true philosopher's stone, the possession of which enables a man, however lopped and shorn, to say with the poet :

“ Per damna, pæer cædes, ab ipso  
Ducit opes, animumque ferro.”

I will not fatigue the reader with relating

how I laboured to make up for lost time in my medical studies—how I went to Paris—how I walked hospitals, English and foreign—how I took the prescribed degrees, and how at length the brass plate was duly affixed to the door of a house in a quiet, respectable street, and how I sat quietly down in the expectancy of practice—I who only live, so to speak, in the excitement of locomotion !



## CHAPTER VII.

## GRAPHIOLOGY AND LETTERS.

ONE morning in reading over the "Times" newspaper, I was struck with an advertisement of a gentleman, who offered for thirteen postage-stamps to delineate any person's character from their handwriting. I immediately caught at this happy idea; I had practised the science more or less all through my life, and was a confirmed believer in its general truth. Hastily concocting an advertisement, I took it to Printing House Square, and calmly awaited the result. It produced eight answers, and the next day three. By a curious coincidence, the first I opened was from a medical man far down east, near the Commercial Road; the others

were mostly from clerks, or business men in the city. No female, strange to say, for several days—not, as I have reason to think, from want of curiosity, but that the leading journal is read by comparatively few of the softer sex.

As this book is not intended as a puff to Graphiology, I will not inflict upon my readers any lengthened treatise on the science, still less to print any of the congratulatory letters I have received, and still retain, should the curious be disposed to refer to them. Should time permit, I do propose to myself the publication of a small book on the subject, with specimens of the handwriting appended to the characters of well-known individuals, contenting myself in this place with barely pointing out the leading principles of the science, and taking at random from history a few examples of their application.

It is unquestionable that the impulses of a man's mind are more or less shown in every act, and almost every movement of his person, why not then in his writing? That his acts,

including his writing, and his words may be controlled by his will is only to say that he may exercise hypocrisy in his writing, as in his speech ; or that a sense of propriety may gloss over the writing, as well as the manners, and make a fairer display than is warranted by the inner nature of the person. For this reason it is that the graphiologist desires his specimens to be culled from the most careless and unstudied effusions—familiar notes, or any other hasty scrawls ; above all, memoranda penned for the writer's perusal only.

In such records it is rare, indeed, if the individual's character be not plainly seen, or at least discovered. The indecisive, the energetic, the impulsive, the cautious, the passionate, the slow, will all leave some trace of their respective tendencies upon the written page. The desultory man will be detected by the fitful vigour and weakness of his writing : the close, contracted mind will assuredly fail in the breadth and candour of his type. The honest, the hearty and the open are clearly to be identified, as well as the punctual, the exact, the plodding,

the formal. The most difficult hands to read are those formed on conventional models—as very many ladies’ writing, and the professional hands of clerks and lawyers; but something is to be gathered from even them. The gentleman is rarely to be mistaken in his writing; however bad, in the common acceptation of the term, it has in it more or less of the ease and refinements of the writer. Even Betsey, when she sits down in a cold garret to pen a line to her young man, will give some evidence either of aspiring to the elegant style of her mistress, or adhering downright, and unambitious, to the pot-hooks of the Sunday-school.

How characteristic is the signature of Queen Elizabeth, stately, tall and queen-like; commanding and imperious, but defaced with ignoble and trivial flourishes; it is a combination of hardness, power and vanity. Her hand varied remarkably at different periods, as her actions did; at one time clear, vigorous and sensible, at others flaunting and puerile in the extreme. An example of the first may be seen in the letter to the Duke of Somerset,

before she came to the throne, in the Lansdown MSS., British Museum ; of the other, in that to James the Fifth of Scotland when she was Queen. This latter she very properly calls her "skraling hand." It is a most affected departure from her usual character, and would almost seem as if she desired to impress him with a notion of a feeble womanly character.

Henry the Seventh's hand is cold and formal. There is an attempt at stateliness in the signature, with puerile adjuncts which bespeak feebleness.

Henry the Eighth writes strong and self-willed, concentrated and without display. He writes himself "Henry. H. T." (Henry Tudor) ; an explicit man, not shrinking from the slight trouble of the repetition. One who would have said : "There was no mistake, there is no mistake, there shall be no mistake." Remarkably strenuous in making things sure, in other things as well as his wives.

Richard the Third's hand is like a charge

of cavalry, cutting right and left, with an occasional strong thrust of a lance through his lines. It is reckless, vigorous and dashing, fearless, for not a line falters, headstrong and unscrupulous.

Anne Boleyn wrote a steady, composed hand, not without force or elegance. Katherine Parr's writing is pedantic and persistive, with much cold, persevering energy. Mary Queen of Scots writes plainly and elegantly, with much clearness of type and unobtrusive firmness. Edward the Sixth's was a hand of laborious pedantry, as was the early writing of our fussy James the First; it expanded, however, into a somewhat freer and more gentlemanlike form after his coming to England. The indecision of the character is shown in the erasures and interlineations, especially in that atrocious letter to the Duke of Buckingham, in 1623, which is more like the letter of a lover to his mistress, than the production of a man, a gentleman, or a king. This letter, he prays him "for Godis saike" to write not a word again, and to let no creature see this letter. Now,

alas! to be read by all in the Lansdown MSS. in the British Museum.

Charles the First wrote like a gentleman, and his son Charles Second, like a very easy gentleman, as he was. The writing of the latter is a perfect specimen of facility with considerable elegance; and the matter in which he threatens to put forth his whole kingly authority with the direct hope of vengeance in another world, all in the matter of a lady of the bed-chamber, is a curious portrait of the man. James the Second is cold and gentlemanlike, too good a hand for so obstinate a bigot.

As specimens of inexorable and pitiless hardness, nothing can exceed some of the writing of John Knox; all his letters do not exhibit this, so that probably the harsh elements of his character were more acquired than natural. Sir Christopher Hatton's writing is like the maze of a coranto or a "passy-measure," and the long shanks of his capital I's are curiously furnished with upturned feet, peculiarly appropriated to the dancing chancellor.

There is a grand, composed firmness in Cromwell's signature, and not a sign of hesitation marks the name which he affixed to the death-warrant of his king.

Queen Anne's is a motherly common-place writing; that of George I. manly and firm, though somewhat coarse. The writing of some is in advance of the period, as that of the unfortunate Henry Darnley, or "Dernley," as he writes himself. The writing seems to have been made a study, and has a print-like type, like that of Edward VI., but very clear and without the quaint flourishes and contractions so usual at the period. Bradshaw, the Regicide, belongs to a century earlier.

A letter of Buckingham's to his "Dere dad and gossope," James I., and signed "your humble Slave and Doge, Steenie," seems very much to indicate the loose feelings of the man. It is a careless and blotted scrambling character, like the writer; yet if he could have dispensed with such phrases as "never none longed more to be in the arms of his mistress" (than he did to throw himself at his master's feet); it is



rather a pleasant exception, in its familiar style, to the cold formality of the times, or, still worse, the fulsome adulation of an earlier period.

There is a flourishing elegance in Prince Rupert's writing, but lacking the earnestness of his opponent, Fairfax. Blackstone wrote a very clear, small, exact hand. Mansfield, plain, firm and refined. Thurlow wrote with unexpected feebleness ; it is a weak, indecisive type, at variance with the bluster and physical courage of the character.

Application and explicitness characterise the writing of Sir William Jones. Marlborough's is easy, assured, and gentlemanlike, befitting the man of irresistible manners and absolute insensibility to physical and moral danger.

The leading character in the hand of our great modern commander is firmness and business-like simplicity. There is not an ornamental or unnecessary line in his whole correspondence ; and the writer has been favoured with a sight of some hundred of his letters on the most familiar subjects. They offer a singular contrast to the curt, stereotyped style of

his Grace as so frequently shown up in the newspapers, entering largely and with the greatest minuteness into details which a man so occupied would have been supposed either to disregard or leave to the discretion of others. The spot where a guard of honour is to be drawn up, is stated to a yard; and even the disposition of a mangle or a plate chest is not beneath the attention of the noble duke; the one has reference to the calculated distance at which the Queen's horses will not be frightened, the other has a thoughtful care of the comfort of some inferior servant—the complete knowledge, by the bye, of whose ways, tastes, and probable likings, form some amusing episodes in the correspondence. There are few public characters of whom the million have a more false idea. The far-seeing kindness, the anxious consideration for others, and the extensive and never-talked of charities, prove that the soubriquet of the “Iron Duke,” however applicable to his unflinching sense of duty, is a complete misnomer, as far as relates to his other characteristics.

Napoleon's writing was remarkably indicative of his character : rapid, impetuous, unscrupulous ; the intense intellectual power outruns the mechanical performance ; the jaded hand is spurred beyond its natural paces, and urged into a swift, aggressive scramble, beyond all conventional or recognised observances. Lord Byron partakes of the same character, and Lord Brougham's also in a remarkable degree betrays more than any I am acquainted with an unconquerable restlessness of impulse, and headlong dash. To ordinary mortal eyes, the manuscripts of the noble and learned Lord offer nothing but a maze of hieroglyphics ; and it is understood that in all Mr. Clowes's extensive printing establishment, there is only one man competent to grapple with it ; and even he is subject to long fits of despair.

Our royal family have generally written good hands. George III's is not very characteristic ; a better intellect might be deduced from it than actually belonged to His Majesty. The hand of George IV. had in it something commanding, with a self-confident ease, befitting

the "finest gentleman in Europe." William IV. wrote plainly and literally; and our gracious Queen conveys her meaning in an extremely graceful, easy, flowing type in which propriety, liberality, refinement and spirit are the leading traits.

I imagine that nations, as well as individuals, have a characteristic style of writing. The French is pretentious, and at the same time somewhat frivolous. The enormous capital with which they commence their initiative "Monsieur," coupled with the lower conclusion, which is an instance of this. The English tradesman's hand is rapid, clear, energetic, and decisive. The English gentleman's is careless, somewhat indolent, yet not without a certain blunt refinement. The style of English ladies is perfect as regards taste and elegance, but too conventional. The Italian hand is proverbial for its beauty. The Spanish is clear, sententious, punctual, and slow, reserving all the pomposity for the signature and its attendant flourishes; the latter are in most cases ingeniously amplicated. And when a man has to

deal with such names as Don Epifanio Morurzururdundua y Zangotita, or Don Juan Nepomuceno de Burionagonatotorecagogeazcoacha, no wonder he should feel a pride in dressing it up in a quaint costume of flourishes. Even my excellent and philosophical friend Don Ramon Lazaro Cacoquimio Pesadumbres y Pordiosero, was understood to require the greater portion of the day to enable him to execute his signature alone; a circumstance unhappily calculated to restrict a correspondence so instructive to his friends.

My four years' practice of graphiology enables me to give some statistics of curiosity. From the many thousands of letters I have received—and their number I have never counted—but when divested of the envelopes and blank leaves, they are sufficient to fill several sacks. I have made a table of the ages of the writers, and I find an overwhelming proportion of my female correspondents to be at the age of twenty-two. The curious age of the male sex seems to be eighteen; but it is not so unequivocal as the other. They extend from ten years of age to

upwards of a hundred. Very young persons are of course put to write by their parents, with a view of showing off their proficiency in penmanship; old people also write from a pardonable vanity of the same kind, as do law and other clerks, in many instances

Very many of my correspondents who send specimens of writing from those of the other sex, are curious to see a little below the surface, previous to the tying of that irrevocable knot which nothing but death or the House of Lords, can unloose; and the enormous amount of information I am expected to give from the merest scraps of writing—longitudinal slips of notes, directed envelopes, or even simply initials, convince me that my powers of discernment are considerably overrated.

Being required by my advertisements to state age, sex, and profession, I am enabled to trace the comparative workings of curiosity in the different callings of life—though, as every one does not name their pursuit, this cannot be so surely relied upon; tailors are coy in this respect, and I have but few declared butchers.

As in these letters there does not seem to be a want of *esprit de corps*, I am disposed to think that as regards their relative numbers, there is less curiosity among them than in any other trade. The clergy and their families seem to be my best contributors. Governesses, dress-makers, and the young men in haberdashers' shops, very many. More of sailors than soldiers ; country schoolmasters not a few ; of farmers' daughters many : and these two classes, with the shopkeepers in the general line, in a country village, furnish the most amusing part of the correspondence. Letters from Ireland are generally from the higher rank ; from Scotland, on the contrary, the majority is the other way ; probably from some vague notion of the second sight being mixed up with it.

I have received many curious, and some beautiful specimens of writing. Ladies and gentlemen of eighty and upwards have contributed fine specimens of that clear, round writing, almost rivalling the Italian style of the sixteenth century, and prevalent with us when Lord Harvey wrote his 'Memoirs,' but now

rarely to be seen. Some of them have rivalled the exquisite writing of Tasso, as seen in the public library at Geneva. Still the majority of my correspondents are, as one of them describes herself, of "age twenty-two, sex tender."

As some of my correspondents write to ask advice under trying circumstances, I am the depository of many curious secrets and some very affecting cases of difficulty, out of which no human aid seemed capable of extricating them. Instances of betrayal and cruel abandonment, and many ingenious, but insufficient forms of striving against poverty. I have received some very intelligent letters from labouring men—mechanics in dockyards and others employed on the wharves. Some rough specimens from the agricultural districts, and much curious illiterature from gentlemen's servants and similar persons. The virtuous reader may perhaps think that it was somewhat beneath a gentleman to extract money from those who could ill afford such an outlay; but it may contribute to his peace of mind to be informed that the



advice I have given has been, at least, honest and disinterested, and therefore surely worth a shilling.

Presuming that newspapers are pretty equally distributed in all parts of the kingdom, the following facts may perhaps afford some statistics of curiosity. From Kent, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire, the correspondence has been very active. From Yorkshire less so, its size considered, than any other county except Oxfordshire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Huntingdonshire. Little from Wales, and least from North Wales. More letters from Liverpool than any other town, London excepted, and fewer from the last, its population considered, than other places.

In the vast mass of my letters—the envelopes of which closely packed would fill about three sacks—there are, as might be supposed, some curious specimens. From these I purpose to select a few, abstaining, of course, from any revelations calculated to betray the writers. They are copied literally; and I vouch for their authenticity. The originals I shall keep to my

dying day. To readers curious in watching the progress of the schoolmaster—now sometime abroad—these letters will afford some rather curious information on the progress of intelligence of the nineteenth century.

Taking up a letter at random I find I have selected that of a monomaniac, if the word may be applied to one who had various distempered fancies, yet is a gentleman of good education, and on many subjects strong reasoning powers. His letters are of such enormous length that it is impossible to insert them here. He commenced by inquiring of me—whom he was pleased to think a man of general acquirements—where he could procure the best lemons at a wholesale price, and on what part of our coast the salt-water was strongest, and at the same time the people most likely to be civil and moderate in their charges; the town he resided in, in Wales, being, as he affirmed, notoriously deficient in these qualities.

Having to the best of my power informed him on these points, recommending generally, as wholesale lemon-merchants, the fruiterers in

Thames Street; I received a request, accompanied by 2s. 6d. in stamps, that I would proceed to Thames Street, and inquire the price of a box of lemons, the amount of the purchase to be transmitted to me for delivery to the fruiterer, and the box to be sent directed to a lady, for fear the people of whom the lemons were purchased should suspect from whom the order came, and so commit some impertinence, as they had done on many occasions before. The letter also intimated that it was of the utmost consequence that the lemons should be of the best quality, as, from the quantity of albumen formed in the writer's stomach, his principal diet (so he called it) consisted of lemons, salt-water, and tobacco!

From internal evidence in the letters themselves there can be no doubt of the perfect earnestness of the person, even if I had not sent him two boxes of lemons and a large parcel of tobacco in the course of a month. It appeared also that he had received extensive supplies of his favourite fruit from the principal merchants at Bristol and London, with most of

whom he had quarrelled on some pretext or other—several having grievously offended by writing “grocer” on the panel. Finding the trouble very great, and the office thankless, I was obliged eventually to discontinue my office of agent for lemons to this eccentric individual.

The following is from a lady who gives her name, and resides in one of the best streets at the west end of London. The words printed in capitals had three or more dashes under them :

“ Sir,

“ Can you be so good as to tell me if my son has had a REAL intrigue with ——, the housemaid of this house; and, in fact, if it WILL come to anything serious or distressing; and where he goes when he spends whole nights and days out? I enclose a bit of his hair, but it is IMPOSSIBLE to get a piece of her’s. She seems 18 or 19, and he is 17, but 6 feet high, and *looks* 23. Their flirtations are too visible, but I am not *certain* that anything serious has yet happened. In haste,

“ Yours obediently.

“P.S. Please to seal up your reply *well*, that my son may not be able to read it, and direct for Mrs. ———, ——— Street, ——— Square.

“And can you tell me if my husband, and two sons have arrived SAFELY in India, and when I may expect letters.”

The promise of increased business so alluringly held out below, would doubtless be more than realized, could the author satisfactorily fulfil the implied conditions.

“Miss S——’s compliments to Dr. Blenkinsop and she will feel greatly obliged if he will please to send her every particular he can, respecting how she is to settle in life. She will like to know his name and profession. If he can favour her with the same, she has no doubt she will be able to get him many more customers, when she has received her answer to show her young friends. Born, March the 8th, 1829, at nine o’clock at night.”

The advent of another admirable Crichton seems probable from this.

“I can split a bullet on a penknife; I know the secret tierce of Coulon, the fencing-master; I can speak two languages, (besides English)

like a native, even to their slang ; I know every game in the cards ; I can act comedy, tragedy. farce ; I can drink down Bacchus himself ; I can make any woman I please in love with me, that is, any woman good for nothing. Can I earn a handsome livelihood out of all this—wear kid gloves and set up a cabriolet ? I am twenty-one : I shall be called, in a short time to the Bar. What are my mental and moral qualities—what their probable influence on my future life ?”

There is no mistaking the earnest truthfulness, and quiet devotion in this.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I am greatly obliged to you for your great attention in answering my last. I fell in love with a young lad when I was 14 years of age. His parents are perfect gentlemen and lived in India. I knew him when he went to school. He always told me that he loved me. He gave me some presents when he went away and told me never to forget him. I have not heard from him for these five years, and I feel that I can never love another. I have had offers of a great many, but I feel I cannot sufficiently love any other but him to make my

husband. I should feel greatly obliged to you if you will tell me your opinion about it, whether you think I shall have him or not. I have enclosed my address, and I would have sent you more stamps, but my wages are very low. I will recommend you to all my friends.

“Your humble servant,

“SARAH ———.”

The following may be thought a little *exigeante*, the “consideration” being taken into account.

“Will you be kind enough to tell me whether a certain young man is married—when and where did it take place? If not, will it be better for me to have him or not? What are his intentions towards me? The child that he has had—Is it dead? If dead, where is it buried? If living, how far distant from me? Is the mother of the child’s best adviser dead or living? (!) The young man has been afflicted, can you tell me in what way? Is there likely to be any disturbance about it? If so, how do you think I had better act? Am I likely to do well and prosper, and will my troubles soon be at an end? How much more difficulty to encounter? Are my friends who

sympathize with me in any trouble faithful or deceitful? Please to tell me all you can, as I am very unhappy and overwhelmed in trouble, occasioned by deceit. You will be kind enough to say how long the child has been dead, should it prove so.

“If he’s married, say whether he is likely to do well, and if he thinks of me much. Are the young man’s friends acquainted with the circumstance at all, and what do they think of the matter? Am I likely to remain where I am? Are my superintendents displeased with me? and do they consider I act wrong? Am I likely to be unfortunate in my undertakings, should I be obliged to leave my parents? Are my parents likely to become conscious of what has happened?

“Pardon me for this long epistle. I see that the strictest secrecy may be relied on. I feel obliged by your former letter. An early answer will much oblige.”

Considering that the only address given was that of two initials, to be left till called for at a post-office, this lady might, the general tenour of her letter considered, be under no great apprehension of my divulging her secrets.



“Honoured Sir,

“Feather and Mother sends their respects, and to say the charictere as both like, especially Feather’s. Feather’s a little near, Mother aint. Sir, Mother says if you wouldn’t think it a libberty she would send you a cak, and make it herself for the porpus, if you would accept it. Our carrier goes to the ‘Black Boy’ twice a-week ; there would be nothing to pay, from

“Your’s respectfully.”

It is pitiable to think how many are in the condition of this lady.

“Sir,

“Feeling desirous to know myself, although I am forty-three years of age, I address a few lines, and shall be much obliged by your candid answer, and hope you will not hesitate in pointing out my faults and follies ; for I often think I must have many, never having had the chance to meet with one who would take me for better or worse. If I had had the opportunity, I feel confident I could have made him happy, having been always accustomed to domestic duties and household affairs, for my father was a malster and a plain-spoken farmer. You do not profess telling future events, but just give me your opinion whether it is not now too late

to think of a husband, but had better give it up at once."

A specimen of something more than the diffuse style.

"Sir,

"I was born on a Thursday afternoon about a quarter past four o'clock on the 17th of October, 1810. My mother was attended by Mr. Austin, not the Mr. Austin that is now; that's Mr. John; but his father, who was much respected, and very skilful. He attended mother in all her confinements, except then, and after that Mr. John came. Mr. Austin, that's old Mr. Austin, not Mr. John, he's unmarried, married a Wilcox; they are from Strangeways, very respectable, and a large family; some settled in Man, respectable farmers, and came last summer to see Mr. Austin, that's Mr. John, not the old gentleman who died fourteen years ago come Candlemas, and they do say he has a mind to Jane Wilcox, that's Mr. John, but I don't know; she's a Manx, not so good a stock as he is by no means, or his father before him, though well connected, and with his business might do better, though she is not a bad-looking girl, though dark. Please to inform me if I am likely to marry, and if to

a professional gentleman ; and if I like him or not ; and whether jealous of another or not ; or if he likes me ; and if I expect him to pop the question or not ; or he intends it, and when ? I have a little property left by an aunt, not much, but something ; so he might do worse, and our family well brought up, and respected for years and years in the town ; so there's no such great difference. Mr. Austin, that's old Mr. Austin, not Mr. John, you understand, but old Mr. Austin that's dead, used to tell father we might marry anybody. Please to say how this will be, and if soon or not, for mother's very poorly.

“ Yours respectfully,

“ P.S.—Mother often says I am sweet upon Mr. John ; but don't you believe it.”

I have often wondered if the following be prose or poetry ; if the latter, it may be thought somewhat deranged, if not quite run mad. The punctuation is adhered to.

“ I am a single lady, and now would know, why usage wills not, womankind allow to pop the question, since we females do ask gents

to wed us by our acts, I'll vow? If any correspondent or yourself will show proof that the custom's wrong, our sex will bow acknowledgment of thanks to him, or you expose the error; try, dear Sir, pray do!

"If you succeed, and are not wedded yet, perchance you may be asked yourself aside; sit all such selfish thoughts, dear Sir, and let love for the public, weal your actions guide, no good which might be consequent forget? all evil should most clearly be denied. I think the present custom's 'gainst our sex high treason; so let our foes for it adduce some reason. Dear Sir, I'm twenty-five; but had it been the plan for ladies to declare their love, I would have married long ere this, I ween. Hard I've striven some young hearts to move; they used to style me plain enough e'en at nineteen, though all have praised the taste with which I drest. Let not the world think that 'tis for myself I wish this liberty were given. Oh, no! I'm thought to be now almost on the shelf; my cheek has lost its blush, my brow its snow; indeed, I never thought of sordid pelf (I really should have liked a husband, though); but it is for the present generation of pretty girls that I make this protestation."

I insert the next to show the kind of school-mistress now ‘abroad.’

“Miss —— presents her compliments to Dr. B., with his fee of thirteen stamps; and would feel obliged if he will rule the planets for her, as she is anxious to know something of her future destiny. She was twenty-six the 2nd of October, 1849; therefore, will be twenty-seven this present year; has been living in a farmer’s family in the capacity of teacher nine months. An early answer, if convenient, will oblige,

“Your’s very respectfully.”

This is from Scotland.

“Sire,

“As I hav long hard of the, I hav taken it on me to writ to you; and I houp you wall send all my good and bad habits, and stat them sapret from eche other, and lick wis you wall stat how it is that I am so hard up for money, and stat it by itsilf; and if thar is any way that I cold turn mysilf that I cold be betor, and lick wis gan I lick the lasses beshur, and let me no about that.”

And enclosed with it was this :

“ W. ———, profession, coachman. State my domestic habits.

“ Your’s very truly.”

One from Ireland.

“ Sir,

“ You have stated the character, of a friend, very accurately. If you have anything good to tell me, will you kindly write at your early convenience ; if not, why you need not hurry, as I am not anxious to have myself love-wounded. Had I the pleasure of corresponding with a lady, I would tell my age at once ; but as there is a gentleman *in the case*, I could not sacrifice. Believe me in anxious expectations, &c.”

And this also is from the sister kingdom. The Hibernicism of attempting to get a true character, by sending a disguised hand, need not be pointed out.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I must confess, I felt rather sceptical of your power of describing a character from merely seeing a few written lines. I have

sent you several of people I know well ; they are very truthful. My own twice indifferent hands, and under disguised names. In the last you gave me affectation ; I am not aware that I possess it, but perhaps I do."

The next writer taxes the science of graphiology in a new line.

" Sir,

" I should be much obliged to you to send me a definition of my character, for which I enclose thirteen stamps. I must request you not to omit naming my defects, and also to tell me if you consider from my handwriting that I should overcome my hesitation of speech, under which I now labour."

The following had a formidable aspect coming as it did while democracy was rampant in Europe.

" Sir,

" I send you thirteen Queen's heads. Age forty-two. Sex, female. Profession, private lady.

" I am, Sir, &c."

The next shows a provident spirit.

“ Brighton.

“ Sir,

“ Having seen your advertisement, I take the opportunity of adresss you. I, like many others, feel antious of knowing a few things. The first question is, if it should please God to take my husband, if I should marry again, and what his trade or profession wold be? Likewise, if you can inform me the moost fortdate year of my life. My age forty-nine the 6th day of November next. Address, &c.”

This shows some ambition as well as confidence.

“ Sir,

“ I hope you will be able to answer these questions; if you cannot truly, do not at all. I wish to get situation as master gardener; would it be to my advantage to leave or remain where I am until an opportunity offers. If I hear of a chance I can apply for it, and if I do not succeed I can come back again on the same terms as before. I have been here since twelve years of age. I am twenty-four, and some advise me to go to a nursery, others not.

“ Do you think I can learn mathematics, algebra, the French and Latin languages, without the aid of a master? I should like to



know whether I shall be able to win the affections of a young woman, which I have only heard of, and not seen yet? And whether it would be to my advantage to marry, or remain single, as yet? Which of these handwritings did I ought to cultivate?

“Your last answer was quite satisfactory; if you had studied me all your lifetime, you could not have been much nearer the mark.”

The mass of evidence now lying before me, proves incontestibly the existence of the grossest credulity, even in persons apparently of average abilities and acquirements; but it is more than all astonishing to find persons believing that I am in possession of knowledge which could not fail to enrich me beyond all calculation, and yet ready to impart that knowledge to another for the trifling consideration of thirteen stamps! This is one amongst very many specimens.

“Sir,

“I have seen an advertisement in the ‘London Journal,’ setting forth your continued success in foretelling people’s characters, &c. I feel anxious you should answer me a few questions, truly. I was born on the

12th day of July, 1815, and am a grocer and provision dealer. You must state character, good or bad; future prospects, rich or poor; also if the following numbers will be successful in the forthcoming Distribution, viz.: —, —, —, —, —. By answering these questions, and giving an outline of character as above, you will oblige,

“Your’s respectfully.

“P.S.—Also, if I shall be richly connected by family marriages.”

O for one half-hour of such knowledge as is implied in the above! And how much think you, gentle reader, a sound, city money-dealer would give me for that half-hour’s exclusive knowledge? Should not I be letting it go dirt cheap, for a sum expressed by five of the largest figures I chose to set down on paper?

The next is a large order for characters, though no hand-writing is sent, nor are the names or number of the friends specified.

“Sir,

“You will oblige me by pointing out the characters of my friends and myself, as it is specified in your advertisements. Female sex;

age twenty-seven, on the 17th of February, at six in the evening.

“ Yours, &c.”

A modest request from a lady of forty-three :

“ Sir,

“ Seeing your advertisement that you can tell a person’s futurity, I particularly wish you to send me word what has passed in every way, and what is to come in every way. Address, &c.”

The letters of very young ladies and gentlemen are not the least amusing of the collection : a specimen or two may suffice.

“ Sir,

“ A contemporary of mine, a Rugby man, born the same month and year, having had a satisfactory definition of character from you, I request you will do me the favour to exercise your penetration upon this specimen of writing ; and I presume I am not asking too much in desiring a truthful delineation.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Yours obediently.

“ Dr. B., &c. &c. &c.

“Age, fifteen. Please address your reply to J. D., Esq., care of the Rev. —, &c.”

“Sir,

“A young lady of my age must have had abundant opportunities of discovering her own character: it is, therefore, for the gratification of a few friends that I make the request to you, hoping you will favour me with a candid and correct sketch of my character.

“Sir, yours, &c.

“Age, seventeen.”

“Miss — will feel obliged to Dr. B. sending her character, as this is her handwriting. She is a young lady of independent property, fifteen years of age.”

“Sir,

“At a ball given at our house during the Christmas week, it became a subject of discussion among some of my young friends whether you really had the power of delineating the characters of persons from an inspection of their handwriting; and to set this question at rest is the object of my now troubling you. I am of no profession, of course, being an only child, and superintending my father's establishment. I am in my fifteenth year.”

This is on the moot question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

“ Sir,

“ Your accurate definition of my character emboldens me to write and ask your advice on a certain point. I am residing in the house of my brother-in-law, which I manage for him. My poor sister has been dead now upwards of five years. It has often occurred to me that there is, or people may think there is, an impropriety in my continuing here, and some have told me he ought to propose. He has never done so, or given me reason to think I am more to him than another ; but he is very friendly and kind, and shakes hands cordially in the morning, and at night. I respect him very highly, and if he seemed really attached, might consent to regard him as a husband ; but think him naturally cold and insensible, though well meaning. When I have stood near him, and our hands have touched accidentally, he has taken no notice, and he never took my hand, except to shake hands, nor behaved with any familiarity at all. He was an excellent husband to my sister ; no family, and comfortable fortune. Please to tell me if you think an alliance would be desirable. I have read in

books of love potions, but do not believe in them, and think it would be wicked. Your advice, dear Sir, will be gratefully received. I am thirty-four years of age, but look much younger, and used to be considered better looking than my sister by young flatterers. Of course such medicines are not dangerous, which you as a medical man could tell.

“Respectfully, &c.

“An answer by return is requested.”

To which the next is an appropriate pendant.

“Sir,

“I am footman and general man in a gentleman’s family in the country, age twenty-four, with a boy to help in the stable. I ride out with the young ladies, and wait at table. I am a single man, but have some thoughts of changing my condition, if so be so you advise it. The youngest young lady is very kind intentioned to me, and often says, the difference of position should never be an obstacle, if there is true affection. They are both very amiable, kind young ladies, their papa independent, but farms his own estate. She is very agreeable to me, and if united, I should consider myself a

favoured mortal. Please to state your advice how to act, and oblige

“Yours respectfully.”

As I have seen no runaway match having taken place in that neighbourhood, I trust honest John has taken my earnest advice, and removed to another family with a good character.

I now give a letter, which shows in a strange point of view one of the ‘aufractuosities of the human mind.’ A lover invents a cause of jealousy against a young woman to whom he is engaged; and knowing the entire falsehood of the charge, which he acknowledges never had any existence but in his own brain, yet works himself up into a state of real jealousy, breaks off the match, and makes both himself and the young woman miserable, he being all the time much attached to her!

“Sir,

“I have consulted you once before; and I again consult you, asking you for a little advice in a very delicate matter. About sixteen months ago, I became acquainted with a young woman

in the country, where I live, and she returned me her love for mine. Three months back it was arranged that we should marry at Michaelmas next. Soon after that, I, in a joke, accused her of unfaithfulness; in fact, that she was carrying on illicit connection with a married man. She, of course, was greatly hurt at it; and asked me for a reason that I thought so. I, of course, could give none, as I never saw her speak to the man in my life: still, strange to say, that thought has ever since harboured in my mind, and I have tormented her; and, in fact, suffered jealousy to get the master of me, without a cause I know. What I spoke and thought a joke, I suffered myself to think was certain truth at last. I now enclose one of her letters; and will thank you to delineate faithfully what you think of her character—age, twenty.”

The letter of this poor girl, so cruelly and absurdly treated, had in it moral evidence of the most perfect innocence. She attributed the accusation to mistake on his part, and contents herself with a simple and earnest denial of the charge. I only hope, for the sake of both, that my advice was acted upon.



Amongst the enormous mass of my correspondents, it is not surprising that some should be found, who, after a lengthened correspondence, should feel some itching of curiosity to see the person with whom such an intercourse had been carrying on. I have had many offers of calls, which I respectfully declined.

I have met altogether four ladies; one by my own wish and appointment, the others by proposals to that effect from themselves; but the reader is not to suppose that they were otherwise than respectable on that account. The impression upon the public mind seems to be that of an aged man, dimly peeping through spectacles, with an exceedingly snuffy nose, and habiliments rather the worse for wear. The letter requesting my first interview is characteristic.

“ Dear Sir,

“ Having now sent you nearly all my friends’ handwriting, and so many letters of my own, that I feel as if I was quite intimate with you, and certainly have a great curiosity to meet you, if that is ever to take place. I live too far off

to think of your ever honouring me with a call, and of course I could not visit you with propriety ; but still if you are in the habit of going to public places in the day-time, it is not impossible that I may recognize you if I knew your personal appearance. My idea is, that you are an elderly gentleman, rather short and thin, and wear spectacles ; please to say if I am right, and excuse my freedom.”

The lady having been made acquainted with my height, the colour of my coat, &c., dropped a hint that not impossibly, on a certain day, she should pay a visit to a friend in Pimlico, and if so, should certainly pass into St. James's Park, by the Queen Dowager's chapel, exactly at two o'clock ; that if she happened to see a gentleman, answering my description, she should be so much obliged if he would kindly hold his chin in his hand while he passed, that there might be no mistake as to the identity. This was cheerfully assented to, on condition that a lady in a *glacé* silk, black velvet mantle, and bonnet to match, would be so obliging as to hold her nose while passing the aforesaid. These preliminaries having been duly

arranged, as the clock announced the hour a lady and gentleman might be seen approaching each other under these rather singular circumstances, though the recognition was so immediate as not to require their continuance.

On another occasion I nearly fell into the hands of a near relation of Mrs. Leo Hunter, whom, for want of a better name, we will call Mrs. L. H. Her idea of her correspondent was that of a gentleman amply folded in a Turkish dressing-gown, with green spectacles, and bristling hair standing wholly on end. For the out-door costume she professed herself at fault, but I inclined to think her imagination took the line of a blue coat, brass buttons, pants and hessians.

She did not go openly to work with me. Darkly hinting at her summer réunions in her delicious gardens at Fulham, she yet hesitated to ask the strange animal till somewhat better acquainted with his aspect and habits—till, in a word, she knew whether he was presentable—that was the great difficulty with her; and it would not, of course, *do* for a lady in Mrs.

L. H.'s position to risk a familiarity with anything atrociously low and vulgar. Mrs. L. H., the reader will observe, had, in addition to the Fulham Villa, a town house in a fashionable street, west, and cultivated with success a footman of respectable calves and a plastered white head ; so Mrs. L. H. was undoubtedly genteel. Mrs. L. H. was absolutely frantic for a further acquaintance—should so like to see me at Fulham—so many clever people at her ré-unions, authors and that sort of thing—but Mr. L. H., not being at home (he never was till six in the evening) of course she could not ask me to favour her with a call, and as Mr. L. H. was out (she forgot to mention in the city), why it was impossible he could call upon me, which he otherwise would have had the most intense pleasure in doing, and indeed she should have insisted upon his doing so long ago, but for that unfortunate circumstance. If she only knew whether I ever passed up her street, she should rush to the window in such an agony of delight, and if I saw a lady bow, I should not think it very strange, should I ?

In reply to this we begged to inform our enthusiastic and too flattering friend that four o'clock, afternoon, was the breathing time of the day with us—that some half-hour later we occasionally did, and certainly should do, ourselves the felicity of walking parkwards, through the happy street where Mrs. L. H. led her innocent and fussy life; where she so successfully cultivated so fine a specimen of the genus homo, enriched with the most natural of calves and the most conventional of head dresses; and that if we should receive an acknowledgment of recognition from any perfect embodiment of female charms at a certain drawing-room window, why—we would not “die of a rose in aromatic pain.” No! we would—if happily surviving the pleasurable shock—live in the blessed consciousness of a condescension too far beyond our merits, and the humble intention of evincing our gratitude by such power of laudation as hath been scantily dealt out to us.

We burnt—we frizzled—in anticipation of the coming day. Needless to say, we dressed

with peculiar care—our correspondents—twenty-five young ladies, all requiring answers by return of post, because they were all going out of town the day after to-morrow. Our correspondents, we say, were forced, for that day, to eat the husky bread of disappointment; for why? we were to be the petted of Mrs. L. H. Our hat—Our olive paletôt—(O tempora, O Moses!) were brushed to a ruinous expenditure of nap; and as for our boots—why, we had almost confided to the reader that we cleaned them ourselves.

What would my fastidious uncle have said at the bare possibility of my getting a coat at Aldgate or the Minories, or even buying one ready-made at all? For any one, however distantly related to himself, to have perpetrated such an enormity, would have been resented as a gross personal insult. He would have shrunk into his tightest leathers at the bare imagination of Brummell's quiet ridicule, conveyed in a sarcastic smile, and a word dropped here and there at the clubs. Happily times are changed, and Beau-Brummellism is some-

what quenched, though not wholly prostrate. Shall we ever live to see the day when a man will be really independent in his choice of dress, walk up Regent Street, in a haic or a burnous, without attracting the small boys; or substitute a cap for a hat, without being called a snob?

Taking a north-westerly direction, we steered towards the urban paradise of Mrs. L. H., the pulse quickening with delightful expectation, and the air growing more balmy as we advanced: nay, when we had fairly cleared the mews at the bottom of the street, a crowd of zephyrs voluptuously jostle us—"fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole those balmy spoils."

It required no detective policeman to discover that the larceny was committed in Mrs. L. H.'s drawing-room.

We had carefully avoided all description of our exterior, and the identifying signal was to be the hat respectfully raised on one side, in

return for which we calculated upon a gracious acknowledgment on the other.

Now, at the bottom of Mrs. L. H.'s street, there plied a respectable individual, in the humble though useful employment of sweeping the crossing. He was not our personal friend, though we *have* known a gentleman—once a lieutenant of infantry—who was reduced to that last refuge of independent industry: nay, we have even seen a lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, who once commanded a regiment in action, reduced to the still greater degradation of a master of the ceremonies at a Cockney tea-garden! So we look with interest at street sweepers, not wholly without an expectation of some such salutation as: "Give us a bob, old fellow—served with you in the 150th;" or "poor sweeper, Sir; once your co-director in the Bullocksmithy and Bognor Atmospheric."

We had a design upon this street-sweeper; so stopping midway in his walk, we arrested the frantic snatches he was making at his hat, by the blunt inquiry, if we took charge



of his effects for a few minutes, would he kindly walk up the street, and when opposite a certain house on the opposite side, execute the most graceful salutation which the limp state of his gossamer permitted, receiving the consideration of one shilling for so doing?

Our friend was at first astounded, and made no reply. Long habituated to the dirty ways of men, he was alive to dodges, and had doubtless often been sold upon that very spot before. Seeing, however, on a more minute scrutiny, that we were not likely to deprive him feloniously of his broom, and that, whatever might be our fate in after-life, we were not just then in a condition to excite professional jealousy, he frankly consented.

“ You could not lend us your hat, Sir ? ”

We thoughtfully declined.

“ Your cane ? ”

“ With the greatest pleasure—and take the kids too ” (lambs, we ought rather to have said ; and which, from long wear and frequent cleaning, would have fitted the gouty hands of an alderman, let alone a street-sweeper).

Our friend was a wag in a quiet way, and this last acquisition fanned the latent spark of his jocosity. He buttoned his coat to the chin, to hide a deficiency perhaps attributable to his laundress, gave his beaver—we ought rather to say his Carolina, for it was undoubtedly a vegetable production—a rake over the ear, and was about to tie his neckcloth tighter, when we stopped him.

“Stay, that will never do. Undo it altogether; now apply the middle part of the cloth to the back of the neck, and bringing the two ends in front, tie the largest bow the fogle will admit of; nay, pull it out across your throat till it’s square with your shoulders, to resemble as much as you can the lower bar of a pig’s yoke: wider, my friend, wider, and spread the bows; now, button the gloves, assume a fashionable air, twirl the cane gracefully with your right hand, and take off your hat opposite 56 with all the grace you can muster.”

We abandoned the broom to see it; it was perfect. Making a half turn to the house of

Mrs. L. H., he threw his head into a diagonal position, with a languishing leer towards the drawing-room, such as we certainly could never have attained, then raising the hat to arm's-length, he dived forwards, still keeping the hat at its highest elevation ; and having recovered himself, flourished the gossamer three times in the air before he replaced it.

The reader, accustomed to see merit rewarded, may suppose that a strict intimacy was run up between Mrs. L. H. and ourselves after this ; but, will it be believed ? the summer passed away without an invitation to Fulham, or any other opportunity being granted of basking in that amiable lady's smiles ; nor has our correspondence been renewed to this hour.

I consider the next a difficult letter to answer.

“ Sir,—I understand by the paper that you give advice to the curious. Can you inform me by my writing, if I shall settle in life, and what trade my husband will be, and if I shall be happy and faithful ? I am not yet engaged. I am 23 years of age.”

The other specimens I shall give, pretty well speak for themselves.

“ Sir,—Do you profess astronomy, or cast nativity, if so, please state it. Profession, out of place ; female, very bad off.”

“ Sir,—I ham a very yong man of the age of 22, and ham a Butler in a famely, wich I have lived for 4 years ; but I think of goin to learn the Plumen and Paintin, if you think it will swat me, or what will do for me best. I have not been in England 4 years, and Welch by burth. Now, Sir, I shall Leave it to your Gudgment.”

“ Sir,—Please to state a few things has as happened, and a few things has is to happen. Single woman, but have seen a good deal ; age, nineteen. Please to say which it is to be, first or second, or if another, or what will come if it is to come.”

“ Mrs. Doctor Mc ——, widow, is anxious to know herself. She therefore encloses 13 stamps, and hopes to get a quick reply as to future fate and prospects, or likelihood to settle. Age about sixty 4 or five, not less, and may be a little more. Any other information will be gratefully received.”

“SIR,—I am a widow, and do a little in the grocery and generalline, age 307, husband deceased, May, 1840. For two years have kept company with a young man, age 209, but without any means but his labour. Since then, I have been acquainted with a gentleman, a widower, with two children; age about 40-7 or 8. Would wish to ask if I am to settle again, and how you would advise me to act for the best? The gentleman is a grazier and malter, and quite comfortable, or should I change my condition at all?—”

“SIR,—I am a widow, and have been much troubled with relations. Shall I be troubled with them again? I now ask your opinion, if I take a house or a business to help support me, will it be likely to answer? Is there any chance of my settling in life again? There is a lady in high life who has been very friendly to me; will she continue her friendship? Do you see persons at your own residence? &c., &c.”

“SIR,—If possible, your advertisement seems very extraordinary. I should feel obliged by your sending your affabilities to me. My age is nineteen, male sex, and a farmer.”

“SIR,—Seeing an advertisement that you

can tell a person's disposition from their writing, I beg to ask if you can tell me mine? I should also like to know if you can tell me how long I am likely to live, and if that time will be passed in health and peace? I am a single woman, sixty-six years of age."

"SIR,—The writer is a young man, 18 years of age, clerk by profession. Please say if am of sober habits, and an early riser, and oblige, &c."

"Miss —— wishes to know if there is any probability of her settling in life. There is one gentleman whom she has a regard for who paid her attention some time back; he is a widower, in a large way of business. Should wish to be informed if he has ANY idea at the *present* time, or directs his thoughts in any way with regard to marriage; or, *if not*, any other whom she is acquainted with. Please to be concise in your statement, as she is in search of nothing but the truth. Her reasons for stating the above, she does not feel at all reconciled to the life she is leading, caused through a relative she is compelled to reside with, who is VERY aged. In case of her not being destined to marry, would be glad to know if a change of any description is likely to take place?"

Some of my correspondents enter into details of their physical qualities and personal appearance. The following is from a rough customer in every sense.

“SIR,—Please tell my future by my hand. I was born and bred here, and never ten miles from it, and my father before me, and his before him, hundreds of years, I think. I am forty years old come January next, and covered all over with hair like a beast, and comfortable in circumstances, not married, though could be; rather rough and hasty in temper, but living with a worse, a uncle, unbearable, and always disagreeing, and almost determined to cut and go to Hell, better than stop with him; but he is independent, you see, and no family or relatives but me. Please to advise what is best, and if anything likely to happen by death or otherwise.”

“SIR,—I wish you to inform if I shall better my circumstance by change of place, as I am invited to spend a short time in ——, and now reside with an aunt very old in this dull village, without a soul to speak to. I am not at all good-looking, though my eyes are dark and intelligent, and I have a white skin, regular

features, good teeth, &c. I have been told I am pretty, but it was flattery ; twenty-two years of age, have not had an offer, nor any expectation of it. I am told —— is very gay, but generally should prefer retirement. One thing, I think that my figure is good, and expression interesting. Please say if you think blue or pink most becoming, and oblige,

“ Dear Sir, yours respectfully.

“ P.S.—I have been almost prevailed upon to go to ——, which is to be on Thursday next, if you will oblige me with an answer, stating all you think.”

“ SIR,—I am a widow without family, thirty-nine years of age, and am importuned by a gentleman to marry me, which distresses me to think he may design my fortune as much as myself. He is in a general line, was a malster, but unfortunate in business, age 50 or about. I should desire to learn if he designs my fortune, which is pretty well. I am considered agreeable, though stout, and a florid complexion, with light eyes and hair. He is very dark and resolute, about five feet ten, and increasing business. Should you think it suitable, please write by return of post, as he wishes me to fix a day.”



“SIR,—Having perused your advertisement in various periodicals, I write for a delineation of my mental and moral attributes, and what else you can tell. My papa and mamma are deceased, and I reside with grandpa, who is afflicted with the gout, and extremely querulous. I preside at his table, and regulate his establishment. I have not had any offer, although am said to be pretty, and a genteel figure. Should anything happen to grandpa, do you imagine I should remain here? I am rather fine, with hazel eyes, and small features, but you will know whether I am pretty or not better than me (!) Age 15 the 2nd ultimo.”

It would seem that curiosity runs in a place like an epidemic—one catching it from another. This is especially the case in small, remote towns and villages. Childe, a little place in Dorsetshire, is one among many where I seem as well acquainted with the people as if I had resided half my life amongst them. A shrewd, sensible, elderly gardener, I think, a Scotchman, was the first who broke the ice; and he was shortly followed by another of the village seignors. After them came a bustling, in-

quisitive, well-meaning person, who delighted in sending me specimens of all his friends and neighbours' writing, being, however, especially curious as regarded his wife, of whose cramped hand he forwarded various specimens under different names and initials, with a view to a thorough display of her hidden qualities and virtues. This is one of the earliest epistles of this conscientious gentleman :

“ Sir,

“ I wonder very much how you can describe people whom you have never seen, by their writing. It seems next to impossible to do so. (I hope you do it fairly in the fear of God—please not to take this as an insult). I suppose it is a wonderful *gift bestowed* on you. I have seen several people's characters so truly described, that I do not know what to think. The enclosed is from a gentle man seventy years of age.”

In another letter he says :

“ You have hit it off at last. I did not tell you whose writing it was. It was my wife's. I sent you two before of hers, both mere scraps, for I could not get any more.

You call her narrow-minded, she is, indeed, precious near."

Another from the same :

" Sir,

" I sent 23 stamps, Saturday last, which I trust you duly received, and hope you will please to forgive me for hinting at your describing characters by any supernatural power, my belief is that you do it by virtue of some wonderful insight you have of wrigthing, bestowed, as other gifts are, by an all-wise Creator. But you know people say this and that about a thing which puzzles them. It is very interesting to me to get any neighbour to send to you, and it confirms me more and more of your ability. Please to answer this as soon as convenient. . . . Can you so well understand about children as soon as they write a little ?"

As a specimen of a pretentious style, acquired by living solitary in a mill, I give the following, *literatim*.

" Sir,

" I have taken the pleasure of writing to you for information as to my future years, as I

should wish to have my gifts, defects, talents, tastes, and affections, most delightedly and distinguishedly expressed by return of post by the earliest opportunity ; and as you require my age, sex, and profession, I am no particular profession, but have been in the system of assisting in a wind and water corn mill, and am keeping the books and accounts for my father at present. My age twenty-six last August. Male sex, single, living at a lone place at least two miles distant from any town. Never being used to very little company in past years.

“ I remain,” &c.

At the risk of being accused of bad faith, I cannot resist saying that this gentleman dates from “ Doo-little Mills.”

On more than one occasion I have been required to delineate the character from the applicant's mark, and once was asked if the party (who could not write at all) might employ an amanuensis.

And now, gentle readers, and still more, gentle writers, I bid you, with my most sincere acknowledgments, a cordial farewell. I have made many acquaintances through the

medium of graphiology; acquaintances rendered the more entire by the mysterious veil which hangs between us, never in all human probability to be raised. I have, however, in the store-house of imagination many materials for bright pictures, which the fancy has not been slow to fill up. I seem to have more than a mere acquaintance with her of the pallid features who sits in a grove near Machynlleth, "thinking of the past, and wondering what new trials are to come;" with her of the auburn locks, "impertinently called red by Charles," and eyes "by many thought expressive." I have even filled up a fair widow's picture from such a scanty sketch as "I am not so slender as I was—indeed, *he* calls me crummy."

One feature of my correspondence I may be permitted to mention—the matrimonial advertisements. To those who think that such things give use to a mere interchange of practical or other jokes, it may seem a superfluous subject; but it is with many, a serious

business. From a great number of letters I have received requiring advice upon that subject alone, I am enabled to say that each advertisement draws upon an average between twenty and thirty letters : those professing to be from clergymen many more. One of these reverend gentlemen, I traced at the request of a lady who had corresponded with the individual, and had serious thoughts of bestowing her hand, and something more, on “the incumbent of a small living in Derbyshire, who, residing in a remote village, had no other means of introduction to a suitable companion, &c.”

The Bishop had been written to, and reported favourably. The respectable clergyman was just then absent from his vicarage, on account of health, and an address was given in London. Probably his reverence left his clerical habiliments at the parsonage, for never did any one appear less like a clergyman than did his representative in London, who usually inquired for his letters in a rough brown coat, and a pipe in his mouth.

I respectfully take my leave with a word of advice: "Never trust an uncle, and if you have an aunt in a madhouse—there let her stay."

THE END.

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